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THE EXPEDIENCY OF COMPROMISE

FROM the politically radio-active cloud which hangs over the deliberations of the four Foreign Ministers in Paris, one certainty is emerging: none of the Powers—and least of all the U.S.S.R.—desires an absolute breakdown. The Conference, accordingly, is taking the form of a search for compromises, in which, with M. Bidault assigned the rolè of drafter of formulae, the Russians, on the one hand, and the British and Americans, on the other, are sedulously engaged in endeavours to outmanoeuvre each other. In these tactics M. Molotov has so far scored. By abandoning his original contention that the whole of Istria should be ceded to Yugoslavia and accepting the French proposal that Trieste, with a small hinterland running from Duino in the north to Cittanuova in the south, should be constituted as an autonomous territory under international control, he countered effectively the Anglo-American attempt to saddle Russia with the responsibility of refusing to make any concessions, and he presented Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes with a proposal which they could hardly refuse in principle to accept.

The question now turns on the composition and charter of the international regime. M. Molotov was at first insistent that the Statute for Trieste should be framed on the behalf of the United Nations by the Four Powers, with the aid of Italy and Yugoslavia, whereas the Anglo-American contention was that either the Security Council, which is to assure the integrity of the territory, or the Twenty-One Nations' Peace Conference must be directly responsible for working out the details of the regime. There was no likelihood, however, that on an issue thus narrowed the Conference would reach deadlock. The broad principles of international control laid down, M. Molotov agreed to the four Foreign Ministers remitting to their deputies the discussion of details, and leaving final ratification to the Peace Conference. Indeed, since Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary—all three being States within the Russian sphere of influence of Europe—can legitimately claim that they, no less than Yugoslavia, should have a say in the control of the autonomous territory, M. Molotov may not have been averse to letting the Twenty-One Nations have the final say in framing the Statute.

How far the expediency of compromise will influence the Big Four when they pass from the Italian Treaty to the still more controversial question of the future status of Germany, we have yet to see. One danger is that Mr. Brynes and Mr. Bevin, congratulating themselves on having secured a large concession from M. Molotov over Trieste by firmness, may be too ready to believe that, if they adopt an equally tough "Western" line about Germany, the Russians will be ready to be equally accommodating. This by no means follows. That the long-term objective of Russian policy is a unitary Reich, we have little doubt. But they may think that time is on their side, and that, if the economic difficulties in the Western Zones continue long enough, a situation may ultimately arise in which the only possible central administration of Germany will be provided by a pro-Soviet United Socialist Party. Hence, for the moment, they may feel that they can play a strong card by countering any Anglo-American proposals to which they object by retorting that they prefer to continue the present rigid and economically disastrous Zonal partition of Germany. The foundations of European peace will not be firmly laid until the search for tactically expedient compromises is replaced—as Mr. Maurice Edelman suggests on a later page—by a genuine readiness to collaborate for practical economic ends. So long as the Russians suspect that American anxiety to promote "freedom" in the Danube Valley is a mere camouflage for the infiltration of capitalist Big Business into that area, no formulae wrung from M. Molotov will be worth the paper on which they are written. We should be more confident of the long-term results likely to be achieved at Paris, if we saw any reason to believe that the Western democracies are prepared, in their turn, at least to test Russian willingness to collaborate by a real offer to join with the U.S.S.R. in promoting the reconstruction of Central Europe on genuine Socialist lines.

American Price Boom

All price control came off early this week in the United States, as a sequel to President Truman's veto of the unworkable Bill which Congress had presented to him for signature. The House of Representatives was fortunately dismayed at what it had done, and hurriedly approved a measure renewing the control for a further three weeks, in order to allow time for further discussion between the Congress leaders and the Administration. The Senate was in no such haste, and at the time of writing it has still taken no action. The result is the utmost confusion. Speculators have at once got busy on the produce market, forcing up the prices of grain and of other primary goods, while wholesalers and retailers have varied from announcements of their intentions to "hold the price lines" for the present to prompt decisions to push up prices—in many cases by as much as twenty or thirty per cent. Unless control is successfully re-imposed—which means an Act very different from the Bill vetoed by the President—the effects on the world situation are likely to be most unpleasant. Wheat prices will be forced up, and grain will be fed to animals instead of being made available where it is urgently needed to feed starving people; and, to look further ahead, the Americans will probably start out on a speculative boom to be followed in due course by a crash, and both boom and crash will react most unfavourably on the rest of the world. Isolationist tendencies will be strengthened and American willingness to aid in reconstruction as well as in relief overseas will be diminished. Nor will the results be much nicer for the Americans themselves. Both wage earners and all who live on fixed incomes will be penalised, and there will be a series of political struggles between capitalists and workers, with political and economic results impossible as yet to foresee. It is to be hoped that before these words appear the Senate will have acted, and that a satisfactory new price control Bill will be accepted before the breathing-space proposed by the House of Representatives expires.

America Objects

The trouble over the Canadian wheat agreement is important as a foretaste of the attitude which the Americans may be expected to take over a good many other economic issues that will seriously affect British fortunes during the next few years. The facts are simple. The Canadians asked us—not we them—to enter into a long-term contract for the purchase of Canadian wheat which we were bound to need. The purpose was to reconcile the Canadian farmer to a relatively low price, and to encourage him to increase his sowing, by promising him a secure market for his crop. The Americans object that this is "discrimination"—the form of sin to which they object—both because it pledges us to buy the Canadian wheat and because it gives us this wheat at less than the American farmers are asking for theirs. We are now told that to enter into such a contract violates the spirit of the Atlantic Charter and the letter of the American "Proposals" for the World Trade Conference—proposals which, as a condition of getting the loan—they have forced us to promise to support. Our answer is that the "Proposals" are not in force yet, and will not be unless the World Conference adopts them; but the Americans are nevertheless trying to tie us down to acting as if they were in force, or at any rate soon would be. It would be disastrous for this country to accept American dictation against the making of bulk contracts with the Dominions for the purchase of their primary goods at any price on which we and they can agree. We cannot be parties to American plans, under pressure of their farm lobby, to force us to buy at high prices when we can make mutually advantageous bargains with the Dominions on better terms.

The Miners and the Public

The miners are to get their working week of five days; and there is to be no attempt to recruit Polish labour to eke out the deficient supply of British recruits. The five-day week is to be introduced some time next spring, and the existing conditions about working shifts are to remain in force over the coming winter. Meantime, a big effort is to be made to increase the number of recruits to the industry, and it is hoped that the miners, stimulated by the concession of their main demands, will put their backs into the job of averting a really serious crisis during the coming months. The five-day week, when it is introduced, need mean no loss at all of working time, if, as the miners' leaders hope and expect, it leads to more regular attendance at the pits. As for the Polish labour, Mr. Shinwell was left in no doubt that the miners would object to it so strongly that the effect would be more likely to be a fall than a rise in output. It must never be forgotten that the mining villages are still intensely isolated, almost closed communities, with a very well defined traditional way of living. They do not like intruders whom they cannot readily assimilate; and they like them least of all as lodgers for whom no separate houses are available. This, even more than the fear of unemployment after mechanisation, accounts for their attitude towards Polish recruits. The mining outlook is very serious, but there is no way of improving it except with the miners' co-operation; and to get this means breaking down immensely strong resistances which are the outcome of centuries of embittered conflict. The moral is that everything possible must be done to make the conditions more attractive, and that mechanisation must be hurried on at top speed—even if it costs a lot of dollars for American machinery that we ought to have been able to make ourselves.

Newfoundland's National Convention

The result of the elections in Newfoundland—the first held since the suspension of the local Assembly in 1933—indicate that the National Convention will consist for the most part of "new brooms." Only two of the politicians of the pre-1933 period were elected; and the rule that all candidates must have been *bona fide* residents in their constituencies for at least two years (or have been in the Services), cut out the St. John's carpet-baggers who dominated the old Assemblies. The election of three members of the recently founded Labour Party and of two Co-operative representatives shows the emergence of new political and economic forces. Seven other candidates elected were present or retired Government servants, three being teachers; and the Convention will include a sprinkling of lawyers, journalists, and other professional technicians. It is, however, premature to conclude that the political control of the island by the Water Street merchants of St. John's has been ended. Of the six St. John's members elected, three are described as merchants, and one as a broker; and nine other merchants elected in constituencies outside St. John's would appear to be local men with close trade contacts with St. John's merchants. Significantly, though Kenneth Brown, the President of the Fishermen's Protective Union, was returned unopposed, not a single actual fisherman was elected, despite the fact that fishing is the recorded occupation of such a large proportion of the inhabitants. Moreover, despite the Commission's campaign to stimulate farming, only one farmer has been elected to the Convention. When it meets, probably in the early autumn, the Convention will have to advise the Dominions Office as to the best form of future government. The choices are: restoration of full self-government, confederation with Canada, or maintenance of the present Commission government with or without modification. Any decisions reached by the Convention will have to be submitted to a referendum. So far, there is no clear indication of the Convention's probable attitude, but in recent months the idea of confederation with Canada appears to be winning adherents.

A Foreign Press Centre

About half the foreign journalists in London represent newspapers which either cannot afford separate London offices or cannot supply them with funds because of exchange difficulties. These journalists—between fifty and seventy correspondents are now in this position—were able to work here during the war because of the admirable facilities in the Senate House. In July, these facilities come to an end, as the Central Office of Information evacuates the premises. After long discussions with the Foreign Office, the Foreign Press Association has secured only a vague promise of a large room in Carlton House Terrace at some future time. Yet these journalists must have somewhere to work, to meet colleagues, and to maintain a liaison centre. They are asking for a working centre with adequate telephone facilities, a small reading room and reference library, reasonably accessible for Fleet Street and Whitehall. They are prepared to meet the consequent maintenance costs. Obviously, if Britain is to be reported adequately in the foreign press, the Government should meet these modest demands.

Racial Laws in Rhodesia

Southern Rhodesia, which enjoys the extraordinary status of a "self-governing Colony" under the Dominions Office, has some extraordinary laws on her statute books. There are no less than six different passes for which Africans in European towns must apply—and if they are found outside between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. without the requisite number of these (the number varies in different cases), they may be fined £2 or imprisoned for a month. Similar draconian laws exist in South Africa; but South Africa is a Dominion, and we can do nothing about it. In the case of Southern Rhodesia, however, Britain has expressly reserved for herself the right to disallow any discriminatory legislation. This right has never yet been exercised, and more and more discriminatory laws have crept on to the Southern Rhodesian statute book. With a Labour Government in office, it is time this country made a stand, particularly as the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia is now threatening that he will allow no more Africans on the voters' list (there are only a few dozen there at present). Recently, Lord Addison, the Dominions Secretary, received a deputation of Labour M.P.s and Fabians (led by Lord Faringdon) to discuss this subject. The deputation made it clear that it was no longer prepared to let Britain's right to intervene go by default, and that a constitutional crisis was on the way. The issue is of first-class importance within the Empire. As more and more Colonies with mixed populations reach out to self-government, Britain will, in the early stages, have to reserve some powers as against discriminating legislation.

London Transport Charges

Given its terms of reference, it is difficult to see how the Railway Rates Tribunal can reject the London Passenger Transport Board's case for an increase in fares. Owing to increased operating costs, the L.P.T.B.'s net revenue in 1947 is estimated as likely to show a deficit of over £5 millions after its statutory obligations to stockholders have been met. Thus, unless metropolitan transport is to be subsidised by the main-line railways, there is no answer to the argument that charges must be raised. The proposal to raise the minimum fare to 2*d.*, but to increase the mileage covered by the fare, has merits on the grounds of simplifying administration and discouraging the use of transport for very short journeys; but, taken together, the various increases in charges which are sought will add considerably to the already high cost of living in London. The 5½ per cent. which the Board is compelled under its charter to pay its "C" stockholders is an extortionate rate of interest in present monetary conditions; and the terms under which private enterprise in London transport was "bought out" are an example of "how not to do it" when the promised measure for the nationalisation of transport generally is framed.

The Government and the B.B.C.

In the White Paper on broadcasting policy the Government has made one important and unexpected concession to its critics. The Charter, it states, is to be renewed only for a period of five years from January 1st, 1947. This means that a Committee of Enquiry, in order to make full investigations and report in good time before the Charter once again comes up for renewal, would have to start working in about three years' time. If Mr. Morrison gives a definite assurance in the debate that the Government will not renew the Charter again without a full investigation, and that the Committee of Enquiry will be given a year at least in order to do a good job, he should be able to carry his own party with him and to take the sting out of the Opposition attack. It is worth noting that one important argument for deferring the enquiry, which is made in the White Paper, is that the whole wave-length position must come up for review at an international conference. But is it reasonable to suggest that any reorganisation of our own broadcasting service should be made only after and not before this conference?

PARLIAMENT: Small, but Select

Wednesday

JUDGING from the small attendance last Friday, few Members expected much from the Committee Stage of the Burma Legislature Bill. After the all-night alarums and excursions of the early part of the week they had slipped away. But the heavily attended debates are not necessarily the best; a small House may also be select. Friday's Debate on Burma was quite first-rate, very largely because no one attended who did not care about the subject. Criticism from the Government Back Benches was led by Rees Williams, just back from Sarawak, Tom Driberg, who has worked away at this subject for months, and Tom Reid. Arthur Henderson was his usual friendly self, welcoming constructive criticism. On the Tory side, Capt. Gammans expressed the tough business view and Mr. Butler that of the cool progressive Tory whose progress is always just too slow to avert disaster. Godfrey Nicholson, on the other hand, has obviously benefited from his Indian tour and showed a real understanding of the problem. The lengthy Adjournment Debate which followed reached an equally high level, though it was even more sparsely attended. Kenneth Lindsay, who really knows this subject, raised the urgent problem of the emergency training scheme for teachers in a minor but masterly speech. He was followed from the Government side by George Thomas, one of the few Back Benchers who has taken education seriously, and Ellen Wilkinson made a sympathetic reply.

In fact, Friday's Adjournment Debate was a great deal more satisfactory than the full-length affair on Monday which was cut short by the Palestine Adjournment. On this formal occasion Ellen Wilkinson seemed unduly official, though it was hardly fair to criticise her since she cut the most interesting part of her speech. Perhaps the best sense from the Back Benches came from a Conservative, Mr. Pitman. A slight flurry was caused by Mr. Cove, who moved the reduction of the Minister's salary in a strange and unseemly speech. He acutely embarrassed many Labour Members who agreed with his main contention that in sacrificing the three-stream school, the Minister may well endanger a vital principle of Socialist education.

The Palestine Debate was also all the better for not being a carefully prepared affair. It was clear that the Tories did not want to embarrass the Government on this matter and the Debate became a Labour Party meeting on the floor of the House. Sidney Silverman could not have done better in his opening speech, emotional yet dignified, and expressing the Jewish attitude in a way which re-awakened the conscience of the Parliamentary Party. Dick Crossman seconded with hard-headed arguments more concerned with expediency than morality. He also held the attention of a fairly full House. There was a remarkable contrast between the wholly pro-Government feeling which prevailed while Mr. Attlee made his first statement and the extremely uncomfortable silence in which his concluding speech was heard. Very wisely Sidney Silverman did not force a division. A very important occasion; the House began to understand the danger of the Government's course in Palestine.

On Tuesday, after a dreary Committee Stage of the Cable and Wireless Bill, the House was entertained by a post-prandial debate on Diplomatic privileges. Philip Noel-Baker was introducing a short Bill to enable British citizens, selected for the highest Uno jobs, to enjoy the Diplomatic privileges which every country had agreed they should enjoy. The Bill was therefore nothing but a formality, but the gay boys of the Tory Party decided to pretend that it was the intention of the Government to introduce a spoils system. A series of completely irresponsible charges were levelled by Lord Hinchinbrooke, Mr. Boyd-Carpenter, Mr. Wingfield-Digby and Lord Winterton, all of whom claimed to be bitter opponents of privilege. But none of their extravagances exceeded those of Mr. Manningham-Buller who had opened from the Front Bench. In winding up, Philip Noel-Baker delighted the whole House by cutting Mr. Manningham-Buller into very small pieces indeed. With one of the best speeches of the session he made his opponents look extremely silly and sent his supporters to bed in excellent humour.

PHINEAS

LAW AND ORDER

THE Labour Members who moved the Adjournment of the House last Monday challenged the Government's Palestine policy on two grounds. In the first place, they argued, pacification demands a change of attitude in Downing Street as well as in the Jewish Agency—to suppress Jewish terrorism, the causes of it must be removed, and one of those causes is that the White Paper is still in force. In the second place, they gave cogent reasons for believing that the arrest of some 2,600 Jews, nearly all of them Labour and Trade Union leaders, will not prevent violence, as Mr. Attlee had suggested, but increase it.

Mr. Attlee's reply showed no readiness whatsoever to accept the view that he and his colleagues were in any way responsible for unrest in Palestine. Terrorism, he argued, must be suppressed and law and order restored. He has obviously accepted the view of the Chiefs of Staff that the Haganah now constitutes a serious military threat to the British forces in the Middle East, and that its real leaders are to be found in the Jewish Agency, in the Jewish Confederation of Labour, and in the Jewish Labour Party. This inner leadership therefore must be eliminated, in Mr. Attlee's view, and the Haganah broken beyond repair as a preliminary to a peaceful settlement of the Palestine problem.

Similar policies have been adopted on many occasions in the past by Conservative administrations. It was therefore no surprise when Mr. Stanley made it clear that the Government need expect no opposition from his Party. If evidence is forthcoming of connections between members of the Executive of the Agency and the Haganah, and between the Haganah and the Irgun, the Conservatives will regard this as full justification for the round-up conducted last week-end, and for the ruthless destruction of Jewish settlements. Apparently a Socialist Government and a Conservative Opposition are in full and cordial agreement that, provided evidence can be found which puts the Jewish Agency in the wrong, an Anglo-Jewish war must be accepted as a just, if regrettable, necessity; and the unanimity of the two Front Benches has the support not only of a great majority of Members of Parliament, but of the British Press, with the significant exception of the *Manchester Guardian*. When, in the past, we have blundered into similar wars of suppression, public opinion in the first few weeks has usually rallied in support of the Government. Pro-Boers were in a small and hated minority in 1899, pro-Irish in 1919. Pro-Jews are in a minority to-day, but among the Government's supporters, both inside and outside the House of Commons, a majority, we suspect, are already beginning to wonder whether Mr. Bevin's big stick should be employed quite so brutally against the relatives of the victims of Hitler's gas chambers. Apparently the Cabinet were led to believe that the arrest of a few thousand extremists would make possible a new approach to the moderate leaders, mostly business-men and bankers, who had not been arrested. A tentative approach was made to Dr. Weizmann over the week-end, with a suggestion that he and others, including the Mayor of Tel Aviv, should begin discussions with the Administration. Dr. Weizmann, we gather, refused to consider such discussions as long as his colleagues were in prison without trial. Indeed, the new British policy is a bitterer blow for him than for those Jewish leaders who are under arrest. Dr. Weizmann has always stood for co-operation with Britain on the ground that the British were reasonable people who believed in fair play. In Jewish eyes last week's action destroyed the last grounds for that belief.

Intransigence in London will stimulate an equal and opposite intransigence in Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel-Aviv. Mr. Attlee said nothing which would enable Dr. Weizmann and the moderates around him to protest against the campaign of civil disobedience which is about to start in Palestine. On the contrary, what he said—and even more the way he said it—will confirm the darkest suspicions of Jews inside and outside Palestine and will drive the most law-abiding friends of this country to throw in their lot with the youthful Nationalists of the Haganah.

The Middle Eastern experts argue that the liquidation of the Haganah will convince the Arab League of our good intentions and so make easier the vital agreement that our troops, after the evacuation of Egypt, should be transferred to the barracks now building at Gaza and G.H.Q. Middle East to Ramlea. Such an excuse for the Government's action, it should be noted, is also an excuse for Jewish resistance. But is the argument in itself convincing? With the Mufti in residence at King Faruk's palace, what grounds are there for the belief that the Arabs will accept a permanent British occupation of an Arab country? Once the Haganah has been disposed of, the Mufti will immediately renew the demand made ever since 1920 for our withdrawal from Palestine. And, if we refuse, he will once again organise an Arab revolt. In that case is the Anglo-Jewish war to be followed by an Anglo-Arab war? Britain will be left without any friend in the Middle East.

Mr. Attlee's and Mr. Bevin's policy towards Greece and Spain have already aroused not unreasonable suspicions in the democratic world. Equally strong suspicions are current about their attitude to Palestine. No documents produced by the Palestine Administration as the result of this *razzia* will convince the American people that the British Empire is justified in overwhelming by armed force the 600,000 Jews of Palestine. Whatever our legal case—and the Great Power always has a good legal case in a war of suppression—Americans will side with the Jews as they did with the Irish.

It is easy to retort that America should be sharing the responsibility in Palestine instead of abusing us from the sideline. The Government is now negotiating with Washington. Did Mr. Bevin imagine that his speech at Bournemouth, with its anti-Semitic and anti-American impromptus, would assist in these negotiations? Can Mr. Attlee really tell us that he has brought American co-operation any nearer by arresting thousands of Jews on the Jewish Sabbath? The Government may for a time be able to convince an uneasy House of Commons and a public more influenced by unconscious anti-Semitism than we like to admit. For a time, it may persuade them that the campaign against the Jews has been forced on it by the actions of the Jews themselves, and that its own failure to accept the principles of the Commission's report has nothing to do with the Jewish mood of desperation. Such arguments will carry little conviction anywhere outside this country. Least of all will they persuade the Americans, who have been told in full detail by American members how the proposal to disarm the Haganah and to break its leadership was strenuously advocated to the Commission by British administrators and generals, but dismissed by the Commission as certain to cause the bloodshed it purported to prevent. If Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin really want American support and assistance in solving the Palestine problem, they should at least have made every effort to win the Jewish Agency to renew co-operation against terrorism, before launching the attack on it.

In fact, they made no effort whatsoever. During the whole of the two months since the publication of the Report—when the Government was busily discussing policy with the Arab leaders—neither Mr. Attlee nor Mr. Bevin saw fit to invite a single member of the Jewish Agency to discuss the Anglo-American Report or even to ask that it should once again aid in the suppression of terrorism. How can Americans fail to suspect that the Government's military advisers for many months have been determined to disarm the Haganah and break the Agency, and that one of the main purposes of last Saturday's raid was to discover the evidence which would justify this course of action ?

It is impossible to escape from the conclusion that throughout the long, weary months since the decision to appoint the Anglo-American Committee, the Prime Minister and Mr. Bevin, despite their anxiety to win American support, have permitted policy to be determined by the peremptory telegrams from the soldiers and civil servants " on the spot." These men have always believed in the White Paper and the policy of suppressing the Jews, and it would be hard to find a Jew in Palestine who does not now believe that the White Paper is the policy also of the Government. Yet Mr. Attlee told the House that this was not his policy, and Mr. Truman's statement envisaging the entry of the 100,000 Jews and promising technical assistance suggests that the Commissioner's recommendations are now, in part at least, Government policy. But the Commission recommended that a programme of further immigration should be coupled with extensive proposals for creating the economic and social basis for Arab-Jewish co-operation. If the whole of the Commission's recommendations had at once been accepted, there was a good chance of avoiding violence against both Jew and Arab. In 1939, after suppressing the Arab revolt, the Government appeased the Arabs by the White Paper, which was illegal under the Mandate and infuriating to the Jews. The Arabs drew the moral that the revolt had paid good dividends. Now the Government seems to insist on repeating this story with the Jews, violently breaking up one of the few hopeful social experiments in the world, and then carrying out, after the suppression, the policy that would have made the suppression unnecessary. Such are the fruits of want of courage and decision.

PEACE WITH RUSSIA

" Offensive and ingenious insinuations," said the British envoy in Paris, " are only calculated to throw new obstacles in the way of accommodation, and it is not by revolting reproaches nor by reciprocal invective that a sincere wish to accomplish the great work of pacification can be evinced." These words of Lord Malmesbury were quoted in 1800 by Charles James Fox who, later in the same speech, added, " A state of peace, immediately after a war of such violence, must, in some respects, be a state of insecurity; but does this not belong in a certain degree to all wars ? And are we never to have peace because that peace may be insecure ? " Fox, who was speaking to the House of Commons on Napoleon's overtures of peace, might have addressed himself in similar terms, were he alive to-day, to the Foreign Ministers' Conference. Reproaches and invective still invite reproaches and invective, whether the initiative comes from Molotov, Bevin or Byrnes : the search for absolute security under exclusive conditions still involves deadlock which means a prolongation of armed insecurity. Can the constant clash of the Four Powers be resolved by finding a level at which their interests accord ? Is there a principle of agreement and a formula for its functioning by means of which the fractured amity of Britain and the U.S.A. on the one part and Russia on the other, may set and, in Bevin's words, " grow together."

The motive of Russia's foreign policy is not essentially different from that of any other Great Power, including Great Britain. She wishes to secure her interests in peace and in such a way that, strategically, she will be advantageously disposed in the event of war. Her potential enemies are Britain and America, just as the potential enemy of Britain and America is Russia. For that reason, she has turned the *cordon sanitaire* inside out, and made it a buffer against the West; for that reason, she has prodded through Bulgaria at Britain's position in the Eastern Mediterranean, helped the Kurds and disturbed the Turks, concerned herself with Trieste and laid her hand on the oil resources of Northern Persia. For that reason, Britain has properly concerned herself with retaining her position in Eastern Europe, in Greece, in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. In the heart of Europe, the diplomatic suit for Germany's favour continues.

" The art of politics in the sphere of foreign relations," said M. Molotov, " does not consist in increasing the number of enemies for one's country. On the contrary, the art of politics in this sphere is to reduce the number of such enemies and make the enemies of yesterday good neighbours, maintaining peaceable relations one with another. History has shown that enmity and wars between our country and Germany have been to the detriment of our countries, not to their benefit." Molotov said this on August 31st, 1939, in justifying his non-aggression pact with Hitler. A unified Germany inclining towards Russia is a more agreeable prospect to M. Molotov than a partitioned Germany with the Western half integrated in a Western Union led by Britain.

Ideology has never been a motive of Soviet foreign policy; sometimes it has been an instrument; often a pretext. Ideology did not harm Russia's relations with Mussolini or Hitler; nor will it affect her relations with Peron. She did not interfere in Azerbaijan on behalf of the oppressed Azerbaijanians any more than regret for the " poor Senussi " will decide Bevin's policy in North Africa. Cant isn't a national monopoly. It is the stock-in-trade of every Imperial Power.

When two Great Power systems oppose each other, their traditional diplomatic technique has been either to establish an equilibrium or an advantage by means of political alliances, bilateral commercial agreements and territorial acquisition. Russia has energetically used all three methods; she has allied herself, for example, with Poland, made a bilateral trade agreement with Hungary and improved her territorial position to the disadvantage of Rumania and Germany. America, through her business men, has made trade agreements in Rumania and Italy, and does not seem likely to yield her Pacific bases; Britain is still trying to make alliances in the West and the Middle East, to conclude a bilateral commercial agreement with Greece, and to secure the trusteeship of territories in North Africa. In this rivalry lie the seeds of a Third World War.

Is it possible, at the points of friction between the Powers, to bind their interests together? To establish a new kind of equilibrium based, not on the balance of opposing forces, but on combined activity? To work together at these critical foci so that, instead of regarding each other suspiciously across the barriers delimiting their spheres of influence, the Powers may have each other under constant and open observation as they pursue a common purpose? To develop a new technique of international collaboration which does not depend on the rigid division of interests or on agreements not to interfere or even on an open-door policy at the scene of rivalry? Is there some new kind of organisation similar to the Combined Food Board or the European Coal Board, both merely advisory bodies, which would, however, have administrative power and in which the Russians would be willing to co-operate?

Molotov said on August 31st, 1939: " It is our duty to think of the interests of the Soviet people, the interests of the U.S.S.R. . . all the more because we are firmly convinced that the interests of the U.S.S.R. coincide with the fundamental interests of the people of other countries."

That may or may not be. But what is certain is that Molotov is concerned with Russia's material advantage, not with Communist evangelism for its own sake. I, therefore, advance the suggestion that through the creation of joint Trading Corporations at the points of Anglo-Soviet rivalry, it may be possible to unite Anglo-Soviet interests, stabilise the present fluid situation, and enable peace to grow from a war-like world.

I visualise the establishment of an Iran Corporation, a Balkan Corporation, an Adriatic Corporation, a Ruhr Corporation, and, later perhaps, a North China Corporation and a Pacific Corporation. Let us consider the constitution of one such Corporation. The Iran Government would have a 51 per cent. shareholding in the Corporation. The remaining shares would be held equally by Britain, Russia and America, which are the Powers most directly interested in Iranian trade. The Corporation itself would be responsible to the Economic Council of Uno, as a safeguard against pursuing policies inimical to those of other nations. To buy and to sell would be its chief function—to buy oil from Iran, to establish quotas (as ECO does in the case of coal) for the Corporation's members as well as for outside purchasers, and to sell to Iran those goods which they might be anxious to sell and Iran to buy. The Corporation would not necessarily monopolise through its export-import functions the entire trade of Iran. There might be supplies which the Corporation would not wish to handle, and these could be sold in the free market, provided that it did not undercut the Corporation. Nor would the free enterprise of the British or American business man be thwarted by the existence of such a Corporation. Just as the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation during the war bought the products of " free enterprise " but made collective sales, so the Iran Corporation would buy from its constituent members and sell to them in an agreed quota for re-sale, where desirable, to private traders. To facilitate the work of the Corporation, it would be associated with the Bank of International Credit, such as is envisaged in the Bretton Woods Agreement. If the Iran peasant couldn't pay for the combine harvester which he would like to import from Kharkov or the tractor from Coventry, the Bank would give him credit through the Corporation. Can it be doubted that such a conjunction of trade and credit would benefit Iran? And give Britain, the U.S.A. and Russia the same advantages in collaboration as they would get, at the risk of war, through their rival Russo-Iranian and Anglo-Iranian Oil Companies?

Turn to the Balkans. No greater contribution could be made to peace than the economic security for the Balkan peasant which would come from the knowledge that the Balkan Corporation would buy his tobacco, his flax and perhaps his timber; that in exchange, he would receive not mouth-organs and aspirins, but agricultural implements from perhaps Russia, perhaps Scottish herrings, perhaps sugar from a French possession and all the other things which could benefit the Balkans if they were not the ground for international intrigue.

" Let trade flow along the Danube," said Bevin. Let it flow, and let the riparian States with Britain and Russia and the U.S.A. form a Danubian Corporation to speed it and to ensure that all who will may take part *in* it on equal terms. Let the Russians, as a *quid pro quo*, be members of a Ruhr Corporation for the administration of the Ruhr, with Germany participating, in the interests of Europe. Let the trade of an internationalised Trieste, directed by an Adriatic Corporation in which Yugoslavia and Italy as well as the Central European States would take part, flourish for the benefit of former antagonists as well as for antagonised allies.

Such might be the pattern of Anglo-Soviet co-operation. Interlinked across the hardening frontier which separates Eastern and Western Europe, joined together functionally in the common interest of trade and related to Uno through the Economic Council, the Powers, great and small, may find through the Joint Trading Corporation a modern equilibrium as a substitute for the old balance of power.

Would Russia for the sake of " security " abstain from such a constructive settlement? Would Britain abstain for a similar reason?

" Security ! " said Fox to the Commons in 1800. " You have security, the only security you can ever expect to get. It is the present nterest of France to make peace."

Maurice Edelman

A LONDON DIARY

After listening to John Strachey's masterly speech on Wednesday, I was not surprised that the Opposition, tacitly agreeing that bread rationing was a necessary insurance, found an excuse for dividing the House on another issue. After all, no one could seriously think that a Government would ration bread unless it was necessary; it is an odd way of courting popularity or cadging votes. The only honest criticism of the Government is that a man of Strachey's intellectual grasp ought to have been in charge of our food problem in 1945. Bob Hudson's ludicrous remark that, apart from Germany and Austria, Britain is now the worst fed white man's country was only a sign that he had no answer to Mr. Strachey's mathematical proof, supported by a full exposure of the facts and figures, that bread rationing was essential because, even when the most favourable assumptions of harvests and steady exports from America are made, our stocks in the pipe-line will be reduced at the end of next month to the lowest point of safety. He rightly said that we could go no further in reducing our rations for the Continent. The finger was pointed to America. After logical analysis came a slashing and deserved attack on the irresponsible propaganda of the Beaverbrook, Rothermere and, especially, the Kemsley press. And behind all this is another fundamental point. Only part of the country has yet realised that in One World we have to pool our rations with less privileged nations. Conservatives seem to be outraged in their souls by the idea that the British and Americans have not an inalienable right to eat twice as many calories as other people.

* * *

The Government will weather the food, coal, housing and such-like crises, but, after listening to the Palestine debate on Monday evening, I doubt whether a party so deeply committed to the National Home will be able to stomach what is now being done in Palestine. The facts will gradually filter through. Can the Labour Ministers wage war against our Allies and friends? Most of the Jewish leaders so far arrested are their Labour and trade union colleagues on the Second International. A Conservative Administration might go to full lengths of ruthlessness and rely on the support of its own rank and file. A Labour Cabinet, with the weight of its past promises round its neck, and a great tradition of support for Socialism abroad and of succour to Hitler's victims, can only carry through such a policy at the cost of its own disintegration.

* * *

One of the constant Tory complaints is that the Government won't give the facts about petrol. I spent some time last week at the Ministry of Fuel and Power, trying to find out what the facts were; and I must say that, if my story is right, I cannot see why Mr. Shinwell has not long ago abashed his critics by stating the facts. I gather that, though we have more oil than we require within the sterling area, we do not, owing to shortage of refineries, have enough motor fuel. In order to maintain civilian supplies in Britain without rationing, we should have to import large amounts of motor fuel from the U.S.A., although against this we can offset the dollars we acquire by selling oil. But we also have to use a great many dollars on tankers since our tanker fleet was mostly destroyed in the war and we now have to rely on the Americans. Taken together, what we spend on motor fuel and on tankers is a very large item in our dollar expenditure. It is fairly clear then that until and unless we get the Loan, we are bound to ration petrol. If the House of Representatives passes the Loan next week, I should not be surprised to see the end of petrol rationing at an early date.

* * *

In the current number of the *Labour Press Service,* Harold Laski contributes a modest footnote to the end of his year as Chairman of the National Executive of the Labour Party. He says that he retires to "the happy obscurity of the Ivory Tower." Of course Laski has never been in an Ivory Tower and is incapable of living in one. His immense and deserved influence among the rank and file of Labour is due to the general recognition that he is of all Labour leaders the most outspoken and the most disinterested. No one ever even suspects him of grinding an axe or wanting a job for himself. Even as Chairman of the Executive he remained independent, and ventured, at the Bournemouth Conference and in this valedictory letter, to be critical on such issues as Greece, Spain, and Palestine. It was Mr. Churchill and Lord Beaverbrook who comically elected him to the position of bogyman which, I'm told, he still maintains amongst the more timid strata of American opinion. To have retained so much modesty and integrity after the extraordinary experience of being gratuitously lampooned in enormous headlines through Britain and America, is a remarkable achievement. A man who survives such an experience is for ever after bigger than life-size. I would like to add one other thing. Whatever criticism people may make of Laski—and he is politically unpopular with many of his colleagues—they are all personally fond of him. They all owe much to his loyal and generous friendship. I know scores of people to whom the politician Laski is anathema, but I have yet to meet anyone who knew him well and did not like him. His public brilliance is often irritating as well as impressive, but his private qualities ensure him devoted friends.

* * *

Here are two ways in which we are trying to convert the Germans to democracy. The first example is the more ludicrous the more one thinks of it. I quote *The Times*:

> A German doctor has been sentenced to imprisonment for a year for not standing for the British National Anthem at the conclusion of a concert at Göttingen.

The second example comes in a letter from an R.A.F. officer describing a quite typical incident.

> . . . so it was decided to throw a farewell party, for the officers only, of course. This took place last night and the expense and extravagance of it were simply fantastic. Amongst the food provided was chicken, lobster, smoked salmon, strawberries, ice-cream; liquor of all sorts (mostly of poor quality) flowed in rivers. Huge marquees were erected on the grass outside the Mess for serving the food and drink. German labourers (paid by the British taxpayer) worked for a week mowing and weeding the grass, trimming the paths, and in one corner a complete little garden, with pool and fountain, flower beds and turf, was created out of a wilderness, in a matter of hours. The lighting was on the same lavish scale—sodium floodlighting, coloured lamps, bowl lights in bushes—very beautiful on a summer night. Inside the Mess, the same extravagance was evident—masses of flowers, huge coloured streamers and placards on the walls, and there was even a specially constructed reception desk with a loud speaker installed. The guests came from all over Germany, and even beyond. I overheard an Air Vice-Marshal describing his flight across from England, specially to attend the party. There were many beautiful sleek German cars, with smart-looking German chauffeurs in attendance, who also are paid for by the British public. Do the people at home know how their money is being spent? Of course, the Germans themselves see nothing wrong in all this. They work terrifically hard and do their very best to make these parties a success. It accords with their ideas of how the officers of a conquering army should behave. It is just the way their own officer class behaved.

* * *

I have just been looking at a circular which proposes some changes in the constitution of the Empire Press Union, which includes most of the important newspapers in the Empire and a good many in this country. When the Union was founded thirty-seven years ago, the idea was to establish a centre for press co-operation and to provide a kind of protective organisation to deal with such questions as news services and communications. Among other things, the Union organises at intervals the Imperial Press Conference, now meeting in England. Up till now, there has been no condition of membership. I notice, however, that this memorandum, which is sponsored by the Council of the Union, suggests that membership of the Union should now be withheld from newspapers "which are hostile to the continued existence of the British Empire." If the Union is to catechise new applicants on their Empire patriotism, I imagine that a good many of the present members will be driven to resign. Does the Empire Press Union want to bar Indian, African or Canadian newspapers because of their editorial views? In short, the memorandum seeks to transform the Union from a trade protection association into an Imperialist group, sharing and promoting the same political ends.

* * *

I asked John Coast, who is more than anyone else responsible for the presence of the Javanese dancers in this country, how it came about that they were here so soon after the war. Some readers may remember his name as the author of a remarkable article on the Jungle Railway which appeared in this journal last year. The story, briefly, is this. Coast worked as a slave labourer under the Japanese on the Jungle Railway for two years after his capture at Singapore in 1942. Tens of thousands died in making this railway. John Coast was among the survivors. When the railway was completed in 1944 the Japanese allowed the P.O.W.s to amuse themselves. They built a bamboo, atap-thatch and matting theatre with bamboo props and backcloths painted with bullock dung. John Coast, who was stage-manager, learnt to speak the Indonesian dialect of Malay like a native of the country and he learnt also a great deal about Malay and Javanese music and dancing. He produced the Javanese dances on the Chungkai Jungle Theatre stage in July, 1944, but, as he says, the performances had to be very slick and well-timed, because if they went on too long the Japanese came in and beat everyone up. Clothing was improvised from Jap mosquito-nets, made gaudy with silver paper from old tea-chests and the orchestral instruments were constructed of 3-ply wood, telegraph wire, soap boxes and cemented Dutch mess-tins. Back in England in August, 1945, Coast made friends with Malays and Javanese here from whom he learnt that Indonesian students, who had been caught in Holland by the war, had not only taken part in the Dutch resistance movement, but also kept up their unique technique of dancing. As a result, a Committee was formed to bring the dancers over; their entrancing performance is now winding up with matinees at the Garrick.

* * *

When I first looked at Fred Uhlman's drawings, twenty-four of which are published in a book entitled *Captivity* (Cape, 8*s.* 6*d.*), I noticed, of course, the beauty of line and sensitivity of the drawings, but I was repelled by the fact that, as Raymond Mortimer remarks in his introduction, they mainly "reflect obsessive emotions." Looking at them again, I found also courage and beauty. They were drawn in unusual circumstances—at least in circumstances which would have been unusual before the war, but which have become the common experience of hundreds of thousands since 1940. Uhlman was a barrister in Germany who made it his job to defend anti-Nazis, and ultimately became a refugee. He was married to an Englishwoman, and in the war was much more trustworthy from the British point of view than many highly placed British people. With hundreds of others, he was suddenly arrested in the panic of June, 1940, and it was many months before he was released. "Luckily," says Mr. Mortimer, "he had in his pocket, when arrested, a small bottle of indian ink, a stick of charcoal, and a pen." He made a hundred drawings or more, of which these are a selection, recording his emotions in captivity and his hatred of the destructive forces of the world. The figure of a small child carrying a balloon appears in many of these drawings, and I cannot do better than quote Mr. Uhlman's own interpretation of this symbol :—

> At first the child with the balloon was my child alone. But slowly this personal conception disappeared and my child grew into the figure of everybody's child marching through despair and death and horror with sure, unfaltering steps, held back by no power on earth, ageless and timeless, into a future that may or may not be happier for the unborn. From this it was a short step to ponder over responsibility for all the misery and horror of our time ; and out of the dark marched a long line of war-criminals, the sinister shapes of false priests (hence the whole sequence inspired by the Spanish Church), capitalists, kings, dictators, fanatics.

* * *

Here is a true story. Johnny, aged 7, overheard his father one evening telling his mother that he could no longer afford to keep such a large house going. He intended to take steps at once to sell the house and move to a smaller one. The next evening, returning from his business, father came face to face with a large notice in his front window—" Glass of Lemonade, 3*d.* Use of Lavatory, 1*d.*"

CRITIC

THE SELF-DENYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS ROLL

(After Pope's "The Dying Christian to his Soul.")

Vital staff of life mundane
While I bite I still abstain.
Heav'n itself must fondly smile
On this proof of self-denial.
Starve the flesh but feed the soul,
Semi-sacramental roll.

Now my enemy in need
Shares the bread whereon I feed,
Loaves I buy my foe will bless
Who eats the bread of idleness.
Such the Christian values are
For which we waged un-Christian war.

Bread from my own mouth I give
That my enemy may live,
May it teach him as he swallows,
Christian virtues are as follows—
Smite not him who smiteth you,
Pardon those who evil do.

I with rationed rolls each day
Reparation gladly pay,
Rebuking those who sing,
(Forgetting Christian charity)
" Where is thy gain, O victory ?
And where, defeat, thy sting ? "

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to S. Brewer.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The Town Clerk reported to the Downs Preservation Committee on an interview with the Rev. R. Q. Nelson regarding his suggestion that notices should be erected on Beachy Head designed to dissuade from suicide persons who might be contemplating it.

The Committee recommend that the Town Clerk obtain specialist advice as to whether such notices are likely to achieve their object.—*Eastbourne Herald.*

Ald. Dan Williams remarked that Coun. Phillips insisted on things being done. Suppose all of them adopted the same attitude where would they be ? he asked.—*Cardigan and Tivy-Side Advertiser.*

The reason for the popularity of Trollope's novels is simple. It is that a life lived solely in the company of laymen is insufferable. For the first time in our history a large proportion of our population grow up without ever coming into contact with any clergyman, and are as a result desiccated. Therefore, deprived of the archdeacon in the flesh, they must for compensation seek him in the novel. It may be that not everyone has yet diagnosed the disease, but there are few who do not suffer from it—Christopher Hollis in the *Tablet.*

Gilbert Titus Brocklehurst, aged 42, a labourer, of Lee Bank, Halifax, who swallowed 40 open safety pins, was bound over at Rochdale yesterday on a charge of attempted suicide. Twenty-eight of the pins were recovered by a doctor.

The chief constable said Brocklehurst had acted in a similar manner on four previous occasions. His explanation was that he was uncomfortable at home.—*Daily Mail.*

The moment you get in a queue start moaning. I do and I get the greatest satisfaction out of it. It is a sort of whispering campaign against the Government. Just start a little insidious chatter against the Government. You are sure to find a Socialist near you ; that makes it more useful and more interesting, for the more they argue the better you are able to put your case. It is the one way we can individually help at the present.—Mrs. Begg at meeting of Guildford Divisional Conservative Association reported in *Surrey Advertiser.*

How did Socialism come into this country ?—Political Socialism is the work of two Germans —Marx and Engels—who being driven off the Continent on account of their subversive activities took refuge in England, spread their doctrine here and their adherents became known as the Labour Party—From circular issued by Chichester Conservative Association.

OPERATION GARDEN PATH

To the public, at least, " Operation Crossroads " —the atom bomb on Bikini Atoll—was a dangerous fiasco. It may prove more dangerous than if the Americans had achieved the first of their objectives in this operation, i.e., to prove, with every artifice of showmanship, that America possessed the definitive weapon of war. The second objective—which was to prove the U.S. Navy's case that warships would survive and that America must have bigger and better fleets—was palpably inconsistent with the first objective. The result of the build-up was to identify " success " with the greatest imaginable devastation. When in fact the experiment was so arranged that palm trees, goats, and ships survived the bomb, the public reaction tends to be that the atom bomb is not so hot after all.

Bikini was an occasion for Congress " junketing " and for a display of the resources (in techniques and imagination) of American radio and camera men. The press of the world mustered in the attendant ships and there were foreign observers, including Russian representation. Some estimates have put the cost of these tests (of which another is due soon) at £125,000,000.

The " build-up " on the radio was typical of the whole affair. There were commentators at the take-off, microphones in observer 'planes, and in Blandy's flagship and the press ship at 18 miles distance. It was terrific ; it was colossal ; it was the greatest show on earth. As far as the British public was concerned, the broadcast was a terrific, colossal flop ; it sounded as though all the legions of heaven and hell were, like startled seagulls, trying to warn men of their folly.

But as a prelude, the B.B.C. did one thing which was salutary and more important than the nonsense at Bikini. They gave the microphone to Dr. J. Bronowski, one of the British expert mission which had surveyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki and had prepared the White Paper, which very sensibly the Government issued twenty-four hours before Bikini. It was a powerful broadcast, movingly put over in terms not of warships, but of shattered beings, of men and women who escaped death from blast and fire, but died slowly of gamma radiation which destroyed the marrow of their bone and cut off their supply of blood cells, of babies killed in the womb, so that there were no births in the graveyard towns, and of babies who would never even be conceived because the rays had sterilised the potential parents. And this was translated into terms of Western cities and into terms of 130,000 tons of junk metal in a Pacific lagoon, and of the 50,000 who would be killed outright and of another 50,000 who would die a lingering death within six weeks.

The world radio hook-up failed. The world press descriptions, in spite of the natural efforts of the journalists to write their way into history, gave the show away and proved what responsible scientists have been saying for months—that it is all " boloney " and that any competent physicist, given a few cents worth of notepaper and a pencil and a little time, could have worked out exactly what would happen to a fleet under these conditions. Six weeks ago the Federation of American Scientists said that of the 100 target ships spread over the radius of miles the majority would be undamaged. " Ships closer than half a mile would be damaged, but only those close to the point of detonation would be sunk. Perhaps ten out of a hundred will be appreciably affected and probably only one or two will be sunk." Four ships were, in fact, sunk, two destroyers and two transports—none of the capital ships. And some of the animal sacrifices were still munching away on board the vessels in the lagoon. That is no comfort ; they will probably die of leucaemia—the blood cancer from the gamma rays.

So in the first experiment, the overhead bomb test, the Navy Department have embarrassingly exceeded their objective. They have shown that it does not need a new Navy to withstand such a bomb ; even the obsolete can survive. They will now go ahead to the next experiment ; the test of exploding a bomb on the surface of the water. This must not be confused (as some correspondents on the spot have done) with an underwater explosion. Again competent scientists with a pencil and paper could give the Navy all the answers.

They can say what ships in what positions will be foundered ; what will happen to those in the immediate radius of the solar furnace which is released ; and what the blast effects will be on armoured ships and in the form of limited tidal waves. As far as the scientists are concerned, the bomb need not go off at all ; it is all there in the atomic ready-reckoner.

The deep-water explosion projected for next year is a very different affair. There are so many unpredictables that most scientists would counsel against the risks. If the bomb was lowered in a bathysphere to a good depth (not a lagoon) the result on a fleet would be pretty decisive, but other strange things might happen. The authorities dismiss the possibility of a chain-reaction being started in atoms of the seas, thus destroying the earth. But apart from vaporisation of the water through the heat, there will be a localised disintegration of atoms in the sea-water. Since water is non-compressible but at the same time is elastic, the shock-waves dissipated when the bomb is exploded in the air, may be confined in a monstrous bubble below the sea. What would follow ? And is it worth any risk to find it out ? Sane men would answer " No."

And sane men must go on saying " No " to all such experiments based on the assumption that human sense must fail and military precautions must be taken against an inevitable atomic war. There is a much more vital experiment which must be tried—the rational application of international control which will remove the threat, not to battleships (since definitely the atomic bomb is not a military weapon for tactical purposes), but to the civil populations of our vulnerable, indefensible cities against which it can be used as a terror weapon.

That is why " Crossroads " even as a fiasco is dangerous. It may lull people into the false assumption that the atom-bomb is not so serious after all and reduce the sense of urgency about setting up an Atomic Development Administration. It will be disastrous if the public misreads " fissile " as " fizzle."

RITCHIE CALDER

ITALY AND INDIA

Each starts with an Ego, and each has the same number of letters; to each by choice and circumstance much of my heart and many of my years have been devoted; and I incline, in my meditative middle-age, to wonder whether there is not a certain similarity between them. Each clings to a long and lovely tattered past, each has an angry inferiority complex, each is divided into several countries with but a vague lingual unity, each has lived for centuries under Kings and tyrants and has produced great art and literature; and both—for I cannot possibly use the word each again—have certain common elements of devotion, disorder, dirt and din which endear them to me in this world of relentless and terrible order which is being, with such difficulty, forced upon untidy, delightful humanity. Above all, both, as it seems to me, at any rate, are interpreted to the world by writers and journalists with an exact inaccuracy which never ceases to amaze.

Santha Rama Rau, author of that, to me, brilliant book, *Home to India*, writes to me, "India is in fantastic confusion—everybody talking of interim governments and constituent assemblies and *pretending that what is so obviously an emotional problem can be solved by legal acrobatics.*" I adduce this only as a suggestion that I may not be quite alone in thinking that the Missions and Commissions, the referenda and elections, the statistics and analyses, the parties and politicians, are just so much poppycock; and that the truth, or a shred of the truth, about the life of a people must be sought at far deeper levels. This is what most writers and all journalists fail to observe: or perhaps, in justice to them, their Editors fail to publish. The ripples of superficial events appear in English print as gospel; and make for the scratching of at least one grey head when perused in Italy or India.

In Italy, after the elections, people say this and that. There will, there won't, be a revolution; there is a black market, poverty, unemployment; prices rise or fall; Fascism is rampant and most ex-Fascists are now Communists; and so on and so forth. All this has nothing whatever to do with the real stream of Italian life, stemming from Greece and Etruria, the Emperors and Byzantium, the Medici and the Borgias and Michelangelo; just as British lawyers and Civil Servants have nothing to do with the stream of Indian life, stemming from nomadic Arabia and graceful Persia and philosophic Dravidia. Our English tradition, the long (but not near so long as India or Italy) tradition of government by compromise, of Stoicism and Fairplay, is one thing: the tradition of India or Italy, tradition of the Ruler, the Tyrant, the Business of Doing-him-in-the-eye by Graft, of accepting Government and Catastrophe as Acts of God, is quite another. Our writers, I submit, are incapable of seeing this difference: and endeavour to interpret in the spirit of Magna Carta. Confusion is thus worse confounded; for who would be bold enough to assert whether England, Italy or India has contributed most to the human race? Not I, at any rate.

Antennæ are out of fashion, but I like them myself. If you go into an English church, your antennæ—or, at least, mine—discover a conventional piety, whispers, and an empty sense of the past; nothing speaks to you of the present, because religion is now a State affair. If you go into temple or mosque in India, even a moderate antenna will tell you that here there is great faith, faith apart from and above passing Kings and Governments, and faith that is part of the earth and the sun and human chatter. If you go into an Italian church, I don't care where it may be, you will observe that same feeling of faith, that human and comforting mixture of devotion and disorder, the plaster saints and artificial flowers, the din of the children playing in the paper-littered piazza, the sense of continuity, above all the belief that here the real Ruler resides. And if you really listen to your antennæ, you may feel that Fascism and Great Moghuls, Akhbars and Machiavellis, Allied Commissions and Round-table Conferences, are matters of small and fleeting import so long as the candles burn on the altar, and St. Anthony is merciful, and the good earth gives in plenty. In Rome during the elections, the Madonna del Divino Amore, Protectress of Rome, issued in procession from the lovely square of Sant' Ignazio on her way home to Castel di Leva; and to her the crowds gave far more fervent adoration and trust than to the polling-booths. To the latter, indeed, they went; the Allies wished it, and no one knows better than Italians how to render to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's; but all that was apart from, as the Madonna was a part of, their stream of life.

If I were asked, then, what the "feeling" of Italy might be after the elections, my reply would come like a gunshot—*Nil.* The polls were a *festa*, the proclamation of the Republic was a *festa*, and on the next day the streets were empty, and people were concerned about the olives and the vines and the wheat and whether Unrra had really sent that spaghetti. By June 17th Italian papers were devoting their front pages to the Milan-Montecatini cycle race and only a few lines were given to the Constituent Assembly and the Big Four. True, the dramatic superstitious South will grumble after Monarchy which it has always known; the feudal, individual Centre will seek the Patrons, Fascist, Communist, Foreign, who have always been to hand; the greedy, clever, parasitic North will aim at collaboration with the European rich; the shivering North-East, heir to the everlasting depredations of Austria or Milan, will endeavour to obtain Protection: and the four have no real unity of purpose, save that of devotion and disorder and paganism. Unity sufficient, perhaps; and centred, in Italy as in India, in the eager thriftless generosity which extends from the poor relation and the unfortunate friend to the unemployed and the beggar, giving with open hand from empty purse and never questioning the why or wherefore.

The Times, on two successive days, devotes main headlines to Italy which read, "The Impasse in Italy," and "Italian Deadlock still Unbroken." On the same days headlines for India read "Parties Opposite Standpoints," and "A New Hitch in India." I, who am in Italy and have been in India, submit—with no offence to *The Times* intended—that there was no deadlock and no impasse, and that the "new hitch" is as ancient as the Himalayas. In Italy the King was perfectly correct in desiring, before he left, to see that so narrow a majority as the Republic had was decisively confirmed. The Government itself boggled at such a close result, and it is even now quite logical to assume that if every voter had voted and every vote had been legal there might have been a Monarchic majority. Umberto had been sufficiently taunted for running away once; why should he do it twice? And, as for India, no hitch exists or has ever existed except that one hitch so often described by Gandhi, that the British "will not get down from their high horse." When they do, Gandhi and Jinnah will come to terms. But in passing might one ask why narrow majorities in Italy, Trieste, Greece, and even England are accepted as final, while huge majorities, such as that of the Congress, are brushed aside?

Answers to these things, I submit, are not to be found in politics and blue books. They are to be found, if anywhere, in the real adjustment of Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon minds to Latin or Asiatic thought. The quiet, orderly, useful canal may meet, at a natural point, the turbulent, quivering, sparkling sea; but you cannot impose the order of the canal upon the sea, and if you endeavour to describe the sea in terms of the canal, you will describe it as rough and disorderly. The ripples of politics pass over both, but their different characters remain unchanged. Italy and India desire, naturally, to shake off the locks and dams imposed upon them by the World of the Canals; and nobody, least of all themselves, knows what will happen after. But probably they will be themselves, which is what, I imagine, most people want to be. You knew all that before? Of course; but why not apply it to politics, and recognise them as ephemeral ripples on the surface of history? Lionel Fielden

RADIO NOTES

Talks in the Sun. It was high time somebody said a sharp word about the complacent squalor into which English urban life has been allowed to drift, and who should say it better or more forthrightly than Mr. Priestley? His comparison of our *savoir vivre* with that of the Swiss ought to make us ashamed of ourselves; if we do not start at once and pull ourselves out of the slough of sordid living into which the war plunged us, we shall forget that a higher standard of happiness is possible. For complacency is the real danger. We English do not know how to live, and the fact is all the more wretchedly apparent at this moment, when, for the first time in centuries, the surfeit of prosperity has been removed which enabled us to create an illusion of desirable life. Look at the vast unmanageable crowds, with no room to do anything in comfort, consuming inadequate meals of disgusting, unhealthy food, and putting up with the maximum of inconvenience at every turn. Ploughing my way along Oxford Street not long ago, I heard a woman say to another in a dull, hopeless voice, as she pointed to a window full of cheap bead necklaces: "That's a nice shop—if you have time to look at it." What struck me as dreadful about this remark was the utter absence of the idea that bead necklaces are meant to be bought and that she had a perfect right, not only to the time for choosing one, but to buy it as well. But London shops no longer lure customers inside them; the Paris or Geneva shop-windows display things which are beautifully made, enticing and withal real; whereas the cheap, nasty, "utility" object which glares defiantly at me from the dull eye of the London store either is a dummy or resembles one—like the imitation food in the doll's house which annoyed Huncamunca so much. But then, Huncamunca had the spirit to smash the plates which deceived her . . . Mr. Priestley, with his homely eloquence, has given a lead which town-dwellers cannot afford to ignore.

Talks. Dr. Maude Royden, whose sincere and moving broadcasts "On Facing Suffering" have just come to an end, possesses a voice which must sound well in a pulpit or the open air, but is ill-adapted to radio. The microphone, in its malicious way, seized upon the emotional quality in Dr. Royden's tones and made them sound sentimental—on the verge of tears. This gave her broadcasts an embarrassing quality which spoilt, for me, much of the pleasure and interest I felt in what she had to say. On the other hand, Richard Usborne, talking about current books, seemed to have the ideal broadcasting voice—cultivated but not snooty, varied in tempo and perfectly at ease with the listener. Admittedly he was not concerned to touch our emotions; but if he had been, his would still have been a surer method than Dr. Royden's.

The Parnell Commission. Perhaps because they are essentially static, law-court scenes are nearly always riveting on the air (you remember the *Wallace Case?*). Perhaps also because it was composed by Denis Johnston, this reconstruction of a *cause célèbre* was one of the very best features we have heard in recent times. The Northern Ireland station are to be congratulated on a remarkable production. The cast was uniformly excellent, but I must single out James Mageean, whose performance as the wretched forger, Pigott, was a masterpiece of radio acting.

Recommendations.—*Sunday, July 7th.* International Society for Contemporary Music (3 p.m.); Finding Alpine Britain (Stephen Potter, 7 p.m.); The Stormy Petrel (9.30 p.m.).

Monday: Soviet Asia (John Lawrence, 7.45 p.m.); Dr. Faustus (9.15 p.m.).; Wellington (L.P. 10 a.m.)

Tuesday: Little Red Riding Hood (George Orwell 5 p.m.); British Music Festival (7.30 p.m.); Goncharov (V. S. Pritchett, 11.3 p.m.).

Wednesday: Concert (7 p.m.); Science Survey (10 p.m.).

Friday: Boyd Neel String Orchestra (7 p.m.).

Edward Sackville West

PLEASURES FOR THE EYE

THE exhibition at Tooth's of some thirty paintings by Mary Potter should give this artist, who is still not widely enough known, the reputation she deserves. She paints with an enjoyment that is infectious. She obviously loves flowers and vases and the seaside and pale English landscapes. No less obviously she loves paint for its own sake, rather as a child loves the sand it builds into castles. With a palette-knife she applies pigment very dry and sometimes pretty thick—occasionally overdoing it so that one is reminded of plasticine. Her colour is personal and delicate; her pictures would live happily with white furniture and Aubusson carpets. Realistic, though broadly painted, they open as it were windows in the wall upon a seashore or the end of a garden. The only portrait shown suggests that she has what has become the very rare ability to make a likeness that is also a good picture. *Tobacco Plant*, *The White Sun* and *A Picnic* are three of the works that specially caught my fancy. Mary Potter has imagination as well as charm, so that it is a pleasure to look at the world through her eyes.

Wildenstein's offer an anthology of eighteenth-century French furniture, painting and sculpture. Here everything conspires to please, taste and craftsmanship and choice materials. Some of the pictures are feeble—poor Mme Vigée Le Brun, what a dullard! —but a little Fragonard and a marble head by Houdon are fineness itself. And the furniture invites the denizens of the drawing-room to be comfortable, witty, good-natured and on occasion flirtatious. This is what a drawing room is for, and the furniture can therefore be commended as eminently functional.

The Arcade Gallery is showing "Twenty-five pictures in search of their painters"—that is pictures of which the attribution is uncertain. I must risk one response to this challenge. In the picture of four boys' heads, the head in the left bottom corner was, I am convinced, painted nearly two hundred years later than the others.

ROGER MARVELL

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Crime and Punishment," at the New Theatre

Does Rodney Ackland's bold and careful dramatisation of the great novel give satisfying entertainment? Yes. Does it help us to comprehend Dostoievsky? To this many just critics would say "No" on principle. But ever since I saw, at my first real theatre, Beerbohm Tree's famous lightning change of make-up, in thirty seconds dead, from Mr. Peggotty to Mr. Micawber, I have enjoyed these dramatisations. At worst they give us a friendly reminder, as if we were pleasantly flipping through the pages of *Barnaby Rudge*, say, to look at the Cattermole illustrations. And there are better reasons than this for staging *Crime and Punishment*.

We know that Dostoievsky's novels are deeply dramatic because they are concerned with the conflict between man's aspirations and his worldly surroundings, or his habitual character: but perhaps there is something actually missing in his novels which the stage can bring out. Costume and scene can help us most enjoyably to *see* his world, for Dostoievsky, unlike most English novelists, pays so little attention to the actual appearance of things that the people of his books seem to think without faces. In the design of Mr. Sheriff, the setting gives us an unforgettable picture of the crowded tenement building, and Mr. Quayle the producer suggests very correctly the family muddles and wrangles through which Raskolnikoff had to pass in order to get to his own little room beyond. One member of the audience last week was inclined to take a British attitude. The Marmeladoffs are quarrelling. From upstairs and from downstairs, even from the street, odds and ends drift in to watch. Soon the stage is full. "Another Shemozzle," said the man behind me, meaning of course, "these Russians." But if Paradise Court, Poplar, may not behave as differently from the Gyennaza District as we think, there are many real Russian differences which the production emphasises. We see the Russian character as it is described by Chehov in his letters . . . "excitability followed by fatigue, weariness"; or the Russian character exemplified in Ivanov, who believes in a new day which to-morrow will seem like a ghost; and who "believes he is deeply guilty, but in what lies his guilt, he cannot make out." Here is a fine framework for a play, and here is Mr. Gielgud, almost withering away with sensitiveness, to give us a memorable visual picture, with his pale face and pathetic tall hat, of the principal part of the murderer.

Why is it, that in spite of the fine acting and production, we are not more electrified? Perhaps it is that the crime itself is over too early, that we cannot witness it, and cannot see the chain of fateful accidents which made the path to it so easy. Perhaps, for the sake of the theatre, the end seems unreal, and altogether too clear-cut and noble, as if Raskolnikoff's confession had no connection with the self-indulgence and exhibitionism which tempted him to commit the crime. Perhaps we should have been allowed to see more of that earlier Raskolnikoff whom his fellow students thought to be too proud and confident for them. Perhaps Mr. Gielgud acted him too much on the same note, the quiet I-must-be-calm voice followed too quickly, too often, and too regularly by the nervous staccato outbreak. One longed for a minute of quietness, while one marvelled at the ability to keep at strain.

Dame Edith Evans, besides being a great actress, is possessed of a famous and delightful acting personality which has nothing in common with the part of Katerina, the harassed and humorless self-deceiver. But the actress triumphantly dominated the personality in what must be one of the best and most difficult performances of her career. The playing of Peter Ustinov and Miss Fildes has been rightly praised. The acting throughout was quite brilliant. At the moment I am remembering best of the smaller parts Rosalind Atkinson's Lizaveta, and the warm-hearted roughness of Robert Marsden's Razoumikhin.

STEPHEN POTTER

THE MOVIES

"I See a Dark Stranger," at the Odeon

"Fièvres," at the Curzon

Before starting on my round let me give a pre-view of *Gorgonblast*, which will be lifting you out of your seat in August. This is described as a new kind of thriller, tender, maniacal. It will last 287 minutes.

A glove falling from a high storey on Fifth Avenue: down it drops, to be picked up by an aristocrat stepping from his Rolls into the sunshine. No ordinary glove, either, but a cobra-skin gauntlet, picked out with blood-stones. "Whose?" asks Gregory, sniffing it. He must find the other glove. He drives like fury to New York's smartest night-club. Not till weeks later, in the room with the piano and the broken glasses at the end of the corridor, does he discover Petunia—Petunia, married at one time to a society columnist, who disappeared, and now to a fashionable portrait painter, who shows every sign of hydrocyanic poisoning. She is a husband-killer, though only her mother knows this. She growls a blues. She dangles a snakeskin gauntlet. Their eyes meet . . . .

The fashionable portrait painter is being carried out by a back way.

And who would guess (except the audience) that Gregory is the dashing sex-maniac, last of the Gorgonblasts, who has just brought off a sensational double suicide of twin sisters?

. . . Fingers grapple. Mouth applies suction to mouth. The bar-tender shivers.

They marry. He gives her as a wedding present an ocean liner and off they go on their honeymoon. They visit Palm Beach, San Francisco, Lisbon, Casablanca. All their relatives and friends are on board, playing water-polo. She re-reads *Forever Amber*, while he dashes off song-hits and a concerto—all but the last fifteen bars, which won't come. Why not? He hesitates. His music needs something. He steals a glance at Petunia who, behind her novel, has been watching him strangely. In a delirium of happiness each plans to murder the other. They succeed, simultaneously. "Oh, Gregory!" "Petunia! . . . It was better this way . . ." (Here, some tricky cross-cutting will have excited the serious filmgoer.) It is then revealed that the Second Engineer, whose stories about schizophrenia have kept the poker-room in a roar, is really a psychoanalyst who has studied their cases and planned the whole thing. After being chased aloft by detectives with machine-guns he takes a dive down the main funnel. Astonishment of two stokers eating their breakfast. The ship strikes an iceberg and sinks. A copy of *Forever Amber* is seen floating among the wreckage under tropical skies; near it is a piano, and on this the waves play the missing bars of the concerto. The End.

Messrs. Launder and Gilliat have treated us, in *I See a Dark Stranger*, to a spy story full of wit, lightness and thrills. Its heroine (Deborah Kerr) is simmering modern Irish, out to smash the descendants of Cromwell, who gets entangled with spying in Dublin, Cornwall, the Isle of Man. I don't know which I enjoyed more, Miss Kerr's pert performance or the local colour which is everywhere fresh and taking. The plot starts slowly perhaps—the Irish have, amusingly, to be explained—but once off it picks up speed and the authors improvise brilliantly. There is a dazzling sequence near the end, when an armed carriageful joins a trotting Irish funeral, which at the frontier turns out to be a smuggling party with alarm-clocks packed in the coffin. The touch here and elsewhere seems to me not inferior to that of early Sturges; and pictorially *I See a Dark Stranger* gives us uninterrupted pleasure.

Tino Rossi is a singer for vulgar tastes, and *Fièvres* satisfies those tastes lavishly. Here he is, then, the Master, with a plump waist-line, commanding sexual manners, and the jaunty little strut of success, giving you more, far more, sugar-plum than Mozart and walking unscathed through loving squadrons to take up a monk's habit. He treats us then, as you might guess, to Schubert's *Ave Maria*. There is something Crosbyish in this progression, with the difference that M. Rossi is not always bland and can sing.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

BURMA

SIR,—In the recent Commons debate on the Burma Legislature Bill, M.P.s appeared to be much concerned about the restoration of "law and order" in Burma, and it was again suggested, by at least one Conservative M.P., that the main obstacle to the re-establishment of peaceful conditions was Aung San's Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League.

It is time that this slanderous accusation, which has been repeated at regular intervals ever since the end of the Japanese war, was finally disposed of. There is no truth whatever in the suggestion that the AFPFL is in league with the dacoits. Far from condoning dacoity or using it as a political weapon, the organisation of which Aung San is president has done far more than the civil authorities to suppress it. We have it on the authority of Lieut.-General Symes that the Burma Patriotic Forces loyally fulfilled the agreement to hand in their arms. The organised guerrillas were equally prompt in disarming themselves. Furthermore, as soon as the war ended, the AFPFL offered to help the civil authorities in collecting illegally-held arms and restoring peaceful conditions. Where this offer was accepted, as in Tharawaddy, Toungoo, Maubin and Pyinmana, dacoity was rapidly brought under control. Even where the offer was refused—as it was, with typical reactionary pig-headedness, in most places—League volunteers did everything they could. At Yamethin, where I was stationed for several months, two dacoit gangs which had persistently eluded the police's rather feeble efforts to capture them were suppressed by the AFPFL. In the Pegu District police officers publicly thanked the volunteers for their work in maintaining peace and security.

The AFPFL has made an honest effort to co-operate with the authorities, while the Government has done everything likely to goad it into revolt. While many resistance leaders are still in prison and all are dogged by the "security" police, prominent collaborators with the Japanese are shown marked favour and given posts of trust and responsibility. One of them, Thakin Tun Ok, a self-confessed murderer of British prisoners of war, whose arrest as a war criminal was ordered last year by General MacArthur, is now sitting on the Governor's Executive Council, side by side with Dorman-Smith's discredited "Yes-men."

This Council, which apparently is the agency through which the Labour Government proposes to undertake the "economic rehabilitation" of Burma, has recently published a series of "projects" which make little attempt to conceal their purpose of "rehabilitating" the stranglehold over Burmese economic life exercised in pre-war days by Stell Bros., Macgregors, the Burma Trading Corporation, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company and other British-controlled semi-monopolies. Until this is achieved, it would obviously be highly dangerous to hold elections which, by giving an enormous majority to the AFPFL, would result in the relegation of these projects to the dustbin. "Disorder" is as good an excuse for postponing elections as can be devised. There exists, in fact, a vested interest in disorder—but it is not the interest of the AFPFL.

So far, the Burmese people have refused to be provoked, but there is a limit to the endurance of even the most tolerant and good-natured races. Unless the Government wishes to have another colonial revolt on its hands, it had better recognise quickly that the only alternative to co-operation with the Burmese people, who are united as never before behind Aung San and the AFPFL, is a full-blooded policy of imperialist repression. There are plenty of officials on the spot who would welcome the latter course, and the kindest interpretation of the Government's record in Burma since the end of the war is that it has been misled by the biased reports of these people. It cannot, however, indefinitely escape responsibility for the policy which Mr. Butler, on behalf of the Opposition, so cordially endorses.

Leicester. A. H. HANSON

(Formerly Major R.A. and Chief Instructor at the ALFSEA School of Education, Burma)

MORALS AND POLITICS

SIR,—I agree with most of Kingsley Martin's article about "The Dark Side of the Moon," but I object to his phrase "To champion the Soviet Union is their (the British Marxists') business." The context makes it abundantly clear that he wishes this championing to be more critical and discriminating, but nevertheless the basic assumption remains that Marxists *a priori* owe some kind of special allegiance or loyalty to Soviet Russia. I submit that Marxists owe allegiance to Marxism and that their attitude to the Governments of various countries should be determined by an analysis of the policy of the Government in question. I further submit that an objective analysis of Soviet policy during the last ten years—from Foreign Affairs to Labour Legislation and from Education to Penal Administration—leads to conclusions which free Marxists from any obligation to champion the U.S.S.R. The material, mainly in the form of Soviet decrees, statistics and newspaper cuttings, is available to anybody in the British Museum and similar places.

In the same issue John Lewis contributes one more fallacy to the apparently so abstract, in truth so hellishly practical, Ends and Means discussion. He cites Professor Field's *Moral Theory*: "to call the means by which good is achieved, *evil*, is meaningless 'because if good comes of it, and it was done with that intention, it cannot be evil'." The means are therefore morally neutral, and the (future) outcome alone will show whether it was a good or bad thing to deport hundreds of thousands of Poles, or sterilise all Jews. If at this price the war can be won or future wars avoided, then the end is good and the means cannot be evil. But even if we granted that such grandiose surgical operations on humanity were permissible if the positive result were *guaranteed*, such certainty is never available when far-reaching practical decisions have to be taken. The majority of the Nazi rank and file, of Fascists, Syndicalists, Anarchists, Falangists, Trotskyists, Stalinists, were convinced that the end they were fighting and dying for was *good*, and that therefore the means, "if done with that intention, cannot be evil." Hence Munich, Stalin-Hitler pact, gas-chambers, deportations, purges, atom bombs—all done with the best of intentions.

ARTHUR KOESTLER

RUSSIANS IN POLAND

SIR,—As I have recently returned from Poland, after a three months' stay in the country, I wish to answer one or two of the points, raised in Mr. John F. Ennals' letter, in your issue of June 22nd.

He says he saw fewer Russians in Warsaw than he does in the streets of London. This may have been true during the short time he was there. The number of Soviet troops in Warsaw fluctuates. But Warsaw, unfortunately, is not typical of the rest of Poland, as I discovered during an extensive tour of the country. At Poznan airfield, for example, the largest and best airfield in Poland, there is not a Polish uniform to be seen. It is run and garrisoned *entirely* by Russians. The Soviet Army, I found, is present in great strength at every airport and every seaport, without any exception whatever. In smaller numbers they are present in every town of any size. These places are certainly not all on the Soviet lines of communication.

In the rural interior of Poland, it is certainly possible to travel for many miles without encountering a Soviet uniform. But it is necessary to make certain allowances for Russians in Polish uniform. It is useless to blink one's eyes at hard facts. Many officers, apparently Poles, are in reality Russians. I met some of them myself and they don't try to disguise their nationality.

I am sorry I cannot agree with Mr. Ennals that the present Polish Government is working sincerely "for the well-being of peasants and workers." Poland's industries, and (it follows) those who work in these industries, are being exploited for the benefit of Russia. Nobody knows how much of Poland's coal goes East. I have seen the enormous Russian locomotives drawing trains loaded to the roof with Polish coal leaving Katowice for the East. This would be quite in order if it was paid for. But is it?

I wish to state in conclusion that I was pleasantly relieved to find in Poland that religion is entirely free and education at least 90 per cent. free. Like Mr. Ennals, I had, in Poland, freedom to go where I liked, when I liked, and to speak to whom I chose.

MARY CAVANAGH

VICTORY CONFERENCE

SIR,—The necessity of adjusting the functions and machinery of the Labour Party Annual Conference will best be avoided if the Cabinet and the National Executive Committee will settle on their respective responsibilities. The Party organisation at its lower levels is sound, but the Cabinet will speedily lose the "common touch" if the liaison upwards and downwards is faulty. The connecting link is the National Executive Committee and the proceedings of each Annual Conference should prove to what extent it is fulfilling this function.

It is conjectural whether membership of the Cabinet should or should not be a disqualification from membership of the National Executive Committee. I suggest that the duties of a Minister can readily be complementary to those of a leader of the party whence he sprang. Indeed, I am of the opinion that a certain number of Ministers should always be members of the Committee in order best to fulfil the function of liaison.

If these considerations are sound, are Mr. Crossman's misgivings justified? At Bournemouth, when

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COLLINS

criticism from the floor was based on principle (as, happily, it generally was) it was salutary. It was noticeable that the delegates (particularly those who were *not* M.P.s.) have little truck with expediency.

It should also be remembered that, when a Conference "rubber-stamps" Ministerial policy, it may mean that the Minister is good rather than that the Conference is bad!

The agenda itself was a valuable document. The trend of rank-and-file thought could easily be traced. Criticism need not be oral to be worth while and much of this criticism might never have reached the eyes of the Cabinet and the Executive Committee had Mr. St. John Reader's regional system been in operation.

It is, however, to be hoped that by next year Ministers may learn the value, and delegates the technique, of brevity.

W. E. BALMER

(Prospective Labour Candidate: Bristol West)
"Munstead," Tattenham Road,
Brockenhurst, Hants.

CZECHS AND SLOVAKS

SIR,—I was interested in David Raymond's reference to the demonstration at the football match in Bratislava shortly after the elections of Czechoslovakia. I had intentionally refrained from mentioning it in view of the conflicting claims as to its origins made by both the Democratic and Communist parties. By chance, the evening of this outburst against the Czechs, some leading members of the Democratic Party angrily informed me of the outbreak, and alleged that the Communists had inspired it with a view to laying the blame on the Democratic Party for stirring up anti-Czech feeling. Next day, I visited a Communist Minister and, without my raising the matter, he, equally aggrieved, blamed the Democrats in the precise language they had told me the Communists would use. Obviously, I was unable to decide the culprits. All I could do was to hear both sides of the story, which I did, and accept neither. David Raymond prefers to quote the Communist story as correct. I preferred to quote neither. During the election campaign both parties were campaigning for a certain measure of autonomy when it was thought votes would be gained thereby. Following the elections the Communists changed their tune.

With regard to the strike which both David Raymond and I witnessed: again all I can say is we both heard different stories. But that is unimportant, and does not affect my contention, which is that when the elections went against them in Slovakia the Communists chose to resort to the strike weapon to protest against the situation there, rather than accept the verdict of the electorate and allow it to be solved constitutionally.

ERNEST DAVIES

House of Commons.

SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS

SIR,—In the House of Commons on Friday, June 28th, Miss Ellen Wilkinson said that the training of teachers was being held up by the shortage of suitable buildings and that, even where buildings were available, delay was caused by the necessity for extensive alterations. Of 24,000 students who had been accepted for training, 20,000 were still waiting and many would have to wait for more than a year.

With this statement in mind, I am astonished to learn that the War Office now proposes to return Luton Hoo to its owner, Sir Harold Wernher, in the near future. This large mansion has for the past year been used by the Army as a Formation College. Here students from Eastern Command have been able to take intensive four-week courses in academic subjects and in various trades. The extensive and well-equipped hutted camps in the grounds can accommodate up to 800 students.

It has been announced that the present session is to be the last at Luton Hoo. It is understandable that reduction of the strength of Eastern Command should necessitate the merging of this Formation College with another. But I can see no justification for returning the building to private use.

If the all-important teachers' training scheme is being held up by shortage of suitable accommodation, the immediate requisitioning of Luton Hoo by the Ministry of Education is surely an obvious step. Not only is the building admirably suited to the purpose but the Army camps in the grounds could be adapted for student accommodation with the minimum of expense.

Luton Hoo is only one example; there must be dozens of equally suitable houses. Vigorous action by the Ministry in this matter is urgently needed. As long as there are huge country houses in private hands, the plea of shortage of accommodation is an inadmissible excuse.

Stonar House, PATRICK GOLDRING
Middle Street, Deal.

MOSTYN LLOYD

Sir,—The friends of Mostyn Lloyd and all those who came into contact with his work, whether for the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, at the London School of Economics, or in connection with his other public activities such as the campaign for the prevention of destitution, will wish to know that it is proposed to establish a memorial to him. It is intended that his name should be permanently associated with the memorial, which it is hoped will assist in the perpetuation of his influence.

We accordingly invite subscriptions to a fund in order that a memorial should be set up. We propose that the sum raised should be used to establish a bursary or scholarship, to be awarded annually to a student in the Social Science Department, of which Lloyd was the head for so many years. We hope that those who subscribe may leave us who sign this appeal to frame the details of a scheme for the memorial.

Subscriptions may be sent to Miss E. V. Eckhard, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2.

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SOCIALIST STUDENTS

SIR,—As the organising committee of the International Summer School of Socialist students and Youth representatives held in Cambridge last week we would like to communicate our observations on a matter which has been brought into prominence by the discussions at our school.

The work of the committee and the proceedings of the school were hampered by the absence of *national* delegates representing democratic Socialist students in this country. Students from Oxford, Cambridge and the London School of Economics in their individual capacities agreed to initiate steps for the formation of a Labour Party students' organisation.

In Cambridge a Labour Club, affiliated to the local Trades Council, was refounded last November and the success which it has had encourages us to believe that it may be possible to set up similar clubs in other Universities. We think that students in Universities where such clubs exist or could be set up might want to contact the Cambridge Club by writing to the Secretary, H. J. D. Cole, 74, Holders Hill Road, London, N.W.4.

We hope that as a result of these contacts the Cambridge Club might be able to arrange a conference at Xmas for the discussion of future organisation and plans.

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PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON
(John O'London's Weekly)
MICHAEL JOSEPH

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Mr. Rostrevor Hamilton has made an altogether delightful find: the verse reminiscences of a Victorian. In its entirety *The Setting Sun* (published 1870) runs to some 10,000 lines, and Mr. Hamilton's selection and rearrangement of it is called *James Hurnard, A Victorian Character* (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.). It is verse, not poetry. Its author, at the age of fifty-nine, finding himself suddenly set free by the death of his father, struck out on his life's poem, married a "little tender wife," the daughter of an old friend, took his honeymoon in the Isle of Wight, and returned to enjoy the fruits of postponement, an Indian summer of connubiality, verse-writing, books, and garden walks. His sense of modest triumph—"truly a most wonderful, Astounding, startling, pleasing incident"—is unfettered. He beams and capers, he advances his present snugness against the desert-wanderings of fifty, sixty years. He is in his element. Bliss, at last!—and a bliss that can conveniently be added to:

> But now a very great improvement
> Absorbed our daily thoughts and consultations.
> The look-out from our drawing-room was dull:
> How charming it would be to build beyond it
> A pretty little light conservatory,
> Convert the window into a glass door,
> And step into a little realm of flowers!
> This was my gentle wife's own bright idea;
> But how was our new greenhouse to be warmed?
> We soon bethought ourselves how nice't would be
> To warm our greenhouse and our hall together
> By skilled arrangement of hot water-pipes.
> Our house was chilly in the winter time,
> And my sweet tender wife ill bears the cold.

Then, "the shadowy object of my aspirations," came a monster bookcase with folding glass doors, and this at first dismayed the gentle Louisa; but she soon yielded. There was also the four-poster, repolished, its curtains newly crimsoned, in which Cobden had slept.

Round such possessions, and the warmth of companionship and a crackling fire, the writer's feelings lap luxuriantly; but—marriage or no marriage, with or without the unexpected lift of happiness—he would inevitably have poured out himself and his opinions in metre. He had already done so, unpublished, on the topic of social reform. Verse was for him tap-water, gurgling cistern. Hesitant in so many things, he feels here no doubt of himself.

> I can write verses—so can everybody,
> But who can soar up to the heaven of genius?
> Who can sungraph the fancies of the brain?
> Who can distil the quintessence of nature,
> And from the contrarieties of being
> Extract the harmonies of truth and beauty,
> Winning from life its latent poetry?
> None but the poet who is born a poet;
> And if I am a poet I can do it,
> And I was born a poet, and I know it.

Which is greater, his cocksureness or his charm? He's a character, at least, and he knows it. This donkey-charm has its ingredients of wit, of elevation, of self-caricature, of abounding nature. Yarmouth, where he began writing, provokes these reflections:

> Our railway system opens up the way
> And makes it easy for our dull land lubbers
> To see and to enjoy the open ocean,
> And so they flock in thousands to the coast.
> And in the hot and thirsty days of summer
> You see the youth and beauty of the land,
> Drest in the garments proper for the occasion,
> Bobbing and ducking in the nauseous waves
> With infinite amusement and delight,
> Their long hair sodden with the briny water,
> Children with white and dainty little legs,
> Holding their clothes up to avoid the foam,
> Paddling about the playful water's edge,
> Or finding never-wearying amusement
> In dipping in the sand with wooden spades,
> And forming mounds and caves, canals and bridges,
> Soon to be swamped by the relentless waves—
> All, while engaged in indolent amusement,
> Unconsciously imbibing health and strength.
> But now how widely different is the scene!
> The dreary streets are clogged with dirty snow,
> And the sea-beach is bare of human life,
> Except a few old weather-beaten sailors
> Eyeing the sky, the sea, and heaving ships.
> The keen wind drifts the sand along the shore
> In blinding clouds of stinging particles.
> The dear old jetty is almost deserted;
> And vessels waiting for a change of wind
> Lie anchored fast in famous Yarmouth Roads.

Good, bad, mongrel, ingrainedly itself. So, one may think of figures met with every day, originals, the mob-orator, the sleek confiding ram—so *they*, if they took to verse-writing, should come out on paper. But they never do, or if they do, they're primly illiterate. The author of *The Setting Sun* (note his mezzotint title) has the faults we might expect of unpruned conventional feeling. A tribute to his father concludes:

> He was a man of great sincerity;
> One of the tip-top virtues of our manhood

—and almost everywhere he lets us down with a bump, or series of bumps, in case we should be tempted to gauge him too seriously. His flights are those of an early aeronaut; the take-off, the grass-hopper leaps, are in themselves a breathless wonder. Easy enough to make fun. We could probably write better verse ourselves, by the yard; but would it be half as readable or as individual? Should we, supposing a basis of poetic talent, embrace our subject as wholeheartedly? Hurnard writes in blank-verse and knows nothing about blank-verse, except that eleven syllables can vary ten; his tone is appalling; his clichés stun; one reads on with a feeling of "what next?"; there is nothing right, yet, being as he is, he has found what so few do, his perfect expression. After a few dips of tolerant amusement the reader begins to isolate and count on merits: chiefly the sly honesty and shrewd eye that distinguish Chaucer or Crabbe. He hasn't their genius, of course, but he is of their kind.

> She died—

(His cousin Jane, who lived in London, and with whom he corresponded and visited for years.)

> She died—and London now is changed to me,
> As well as also changed within itself,
> Turned upside down with railways underground,
> Enormous railway junctions, Thames' embankments,
> And piles of pompous modern architecture.
> What would my cousin Jane have said to it?
> She knitted me a handsome green silk purse,
> Every fair stitch of which she wrought with care,
> Beneath the glass roof of the Crystal Palace.
> I kept it sacredly until her death,
> And then I wore it in remembrance of her.

The detail of the green silk purse, knitted "beneath the glass roof of the Crystal Palace," is no accident: such homely felicities occur too often for it to be that. He enjoys laying down the law, with a twinkle:

> My rules of health are few and very simple.
> To drink my tea and coffee hot and sweet,
> Avoid all pickles; and take care to eat
> Plenty of pastry, rather than too much meat,
> And not work hard with head, or hands, or feet.

The swaying balance of Science and Religion points to this unpredictable conclusion:

> Tell me the reason of one simple thing,
> And I will pin my faith upon thy sleeve;
> Tell me the reason why the hops in Kent
> Curl round the poles always in one direction,
> The same in which the sun his circuit makes?
> While the convolvulus and scarlet runner
> Twist always in the contrary direction?
> A fact which I found out and have oft noticed:
> And wherefore do the tails of sucking pigs
> Curl, some of them to the right and some to the left;
> And why art thou, O man, without a tail?

He has a heart:

> It is a pity to throw away our pity.
> I think I have a rather tender heart:
> I have a special pity for poor worms
> That, having lost their holes amidst the darkness,
> Crawl helplessly about the ground at morn,
> And many hundreds I have taken tenderly
> And put their heads into the open holes,
> And watched them wriggle in with heartfelt pleasure,
> Praying that God would do as much for me.

He is witty:

> For Englishmen are jocular by nature
> In spite of toothaches, taxes, and the weather,
> And even make a merriment of trouble.
> Every dull chicken has a merry-thought.

He can sketch a scene, landscape or crowd; what is more, he can pack them into a couplet—which, characteristically, is not quite a couplet, though it serves. This, after a rehearsal of the crowds, gets the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race pretty well:

> The dark blue terrier in a lady's lap
> Barks at the light blue spaniel in a window.

In similar terms he can bemoan his solitude, recommend the use of electricity, attack politicians, hope for Heaven, praise the dead and his Quaker ancestry, advocate his own brew of beer (which he didn't touch, though his father was a brewer), singe a lawyer, set down a country walk or the case for feminism—not, it is true, with propriety, but with a freshness that poetic inadequacy seems helpless to impair. This performance has the zest that will sometimes be found among the all-in entertainers of an Orators' Corner. They will square up to anything, and they gain by being on show. Here, then, he presents himself, at a turning-point when, as he says, he wrote in order to dispel melancholy:

> I am a healthy, hearty, brisk old fellow,
> A tall and well-made man, with ruddy cheeks.
> 'Tis true the sleepless fire within my brain
> Has singed the hair off from on top my head,
> Leaving a border only, white as ashes,
> But yet I feel almost as young as ever.
> I am a man without your vulgar vices;
> I have a wise objection to tobacco;
> I neither make a smoke-hole of my mouth
> Nor do I make a dust-bin of my nose;
> I have no taste for leaping over hedges
> And tumbling headlong into muddy ditches
> Risking my limbs, if not my life itself,
> In the pursuit of a poor frightened hare,
> Or worse than that, a worthless stinking fox;
> And I can trust my legs to carry me
> Much better than the legs of any horse;
> Nor have I any taste for shooting birds,
> Which many a sportsman has left off at last
> By shooting his companion or himself;
> I have no taste for any sort of gambling;
> I have no love for either dogs or horses,
> For cats, poll parrots, or grimacing monkeys,
> By which sly nature parodies vain man;
> I love to study books, and men, and women.
> Then wherefore should a woman slight my offer?
> I have been humbled by adversity,
> And yet I have some decent self-respect,
> And I am proud to say that I have never
> So far demeaned myself in my own eyes
> As to solicit twice a woman's hand.
> I look upon myself as quite a catch;
> I have a little fortune of my own,
> Enough and plenty to keep house upon
> In simple wise, without the cares of business,
> Thanks to the bounteous Giver of good gifts.
> Am I a fool to think about a wife?
> What do I care for being called a fool?
> Call me a fool if it so pleases you.

Well, very soon after, these honest merits met with their reward; he and his Louisa strolled into an arbour "unwittingly," and came out affianced lovers. A few months before his death he was elected an alderman of the borough of Colchester. No such success attended his poetry, despite the confident and confiding hopefulness with which the writer penned his envoy—

> That this my little book will soon come forth
> Into the bleak cold world, with the spring lambs,
> Tremblingly, timidly, innocently, playfully,
> An English poem, unlike any other.

Irresistible appeal! James Hurnard has as strong claims on us as Pepys or Kilvert, and I surmise that Mr. Hamilton's ingenious selection will establish his fame.

I have followed Mr. Hamilton to the London Library, where he made his discovery. Like him, I have found *The Setting Sun* "surprisingly readable"; for the good reason that despite dullness it's never dull. It is up to Mr. Rostrevor Hamilton and the Cambridge University Press to give us the whole of this remarkable work. An English poem, unlike any other!

G. W. Stonier

MAXIMILIAN AND CARLOTA

Mexican Empire. By H. MONTGOMERY HYDE. *Macmillan.* 18s.

When the Archduke Maximilian, a younger brother of the Hapsburg Emperor Francis Joseph, was offered the throne of Mexico in 1861, he accepted, giving these reasons: "Owing to the pressure of contemporary conditions the pristine glory of our house has become dimmed. While the Coburgs gain throne after throne and spread their growing power abroad over the whole earth, our family has in quite recent times lost two sovereignties. None sees more clearly than I that it is the duty of our house to wipe out this stain." He never bothered to enquire why this throne was going a-begging or what lay behind the offer. Yet there was little mystery about the business. The winner of the latest Mexican civil war was Juarez, a Radical with no respect for international obligations or the estates of the Church. His refusal to pay the debts incurred by his defeated rival to a Swiss banker by the name of Jecker led to a crisis on the Paris Bourse. Jecker went bankrupt; and the Duc de Morny, Napoleon III's illegitimate brother, was financially involved. Morny and an emissary of the Mexican Clerical party suggested to Napoleon III that a French expedition might install a new regime in Mexico with benefits all round. Napoleon sent the expedition; and, looking round for a suitable puppet monarch, thought to please both the Pope and the Austrians by choosing Maximilian. Foreign intervention with the most high-minded intentions is at best a ticklish adventure. An imported Empire, fathered by astute financiers on a romantic simpleton, was from the outset misbegotten.

The dramatic outline of the imperial fiasco that ensued has long been common knowledge. The first two uneasy years of make-believe royalty in Mexico City, while French columns under Bazaine scoured the countryside trying to suppress the elusive supporters of Juarez; Napoleon III's decision to recall all his troops to face the menacing political situation in Europe, leaving Maximilian and Carlota to shift for themselves; Carlota's voyage back to France in a hopeless effort to persuade Napoleon to change his mind, which ended in her going mad and being confined as a lunatic; and finally, Maximilian's quixotic refusal to abdicate after the French left, his capture by Juarez and his execution by a firing squad on June 19th, 1867.

Mr. Montgomery Hyde has written a detailed account of this tragic story. From his researches into the Hapsburg family archives at Vienna, from Mexican informants and from libraries in the United States, he has collected enough material to trace the lives of Maximilian and Carlota from the cradle to the grave.

Mr. Hyde belongs to the impersonal school of biography, to whom facts are more important than opinions. He presents his accumulation of knowledge in an orderly narrative with the minimum of comment. Perhaps with the death of Philip Guedalla the flamboyant style of biography has come to a natural and somewhat discredited end. The selective process and sceptical method of Lytton Strachey demand masterly restraint in handling if they are not to degenerate into a crude outburst of mockery; and the object of biography is not to create a mere figure of fun. Mr. Hyde certainly does not err in that respect. Historical characters with him are not comic, nor are they tragic: they are colourless. He prefers that his readers should judge for themselves and draw their own conclusions; it is not his business to enlarge on his research work.

So *Mexican Empire* is an admirably solid book for serious reading; and there is plenty of stimulus to the imagination in some of the queer things Mr. Hyde has unearthed. It appears that Maximilian may have been the illegitimate son of the Duke of Reichstadt, and so a grandson of the great Napoleon and a cousin of Napoleon III. If this were physically true, yet his behaviour was typically Hapsburg in its unpractical vainglory. At any rate it seems certain that Maximilian himself had a bastard son by a Mexican gardener's wife, who, oddly enough, also met his death at the hands of a firing party, when he was shot in Paris as a German spy in 1917. This makes Carlota's marital relations with Maximilian even more incomprehensible. She never had a child by him and, in Mexico, never wished to have one. Yet she was far the more ambitious of the two and was hoping to found an Imperial dynasty. Mr. Hyde has evidence that Maximilian had contracted venereal disease and infected his wife before they went to Mexico; and that Carlota was so disgusted that she ceased to be a wife to him. It was even recognised that they would never have a child by their adoption of the grandson of a previous Emperor of Mexico as their heir. Yet Maximilian had this bastard son by another woman, proving that he was not sterile. Carlota's persecution mania only revealed itself in 1866, when Napoleon III refused her appeal for help, but her insanity must have been of longer standing. Only a madwoman could have been so illogical. She longed passionately to launch a new Hapsburg Empire while she refused to provide it with an heir.

Napoleon III, an unattractive enough figure in all conscience, was not the villain of the piece in the final stages. He fully expected Maximilian to abdicate and return to Europe with the French troops, as anyone with a grain of sense would have done. But he could not reckon with Maximilian's idiotic vanity. "To abdicate power into the hands of foreigners would be treason. No Hapsburg would do that." In these absurd words Maximilian announced his decision. His reason for staying was of the same brand of futility as his original reason for going. Hapsburgs, he should have known, like Habakkuk, are capable of anything.

I must draw attention to two unfortunate misprints. On page 243 the number of Mexican Conservatives who attended the Council to decide Maximilian's abdication must be 31, not 21; and in the Genealogical Table Maximilian and his brother Francis Joseph are shown as sons of the Emperor Ferdinand instead of his brother the Archduke Franz Karl.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

IN GOOD HEART

Ditchampton Farm. By A. G. STREET. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 12s. 6d.

A Pullet on the Midden. By RACHEL KNAPPETT. *Joseph.* 10s. 6d.

Set My Hand Upon the Plough. By E. M. BARRAUD. *Littlebury: Worcester Press.* 7s. 6d.

The farming books still come. It was Mr. Street who drove the first furrow in this attractive field—does it now, like so many other fields, show signs of over-cropping? Not on the evidence of these three books. Farming has so rich a variety, and the reactions of the articulate worker are so individual, that the honest writer will not lack readers.

To start, as is proper, with the Master: Mr. Street, having won a wide audience with the charm of his early books, continues to hold them for his blunt opinions. And, however wistfully we may recall *Farmer's Glory*, who shall blame him? "Land," he says, "is more important than people." Farming once more stands at the cross-roads of conflicting policies, endangered, he urges, by the apathy of town voters and the interference of outside officials. So from a farmer who can write we want leadership more than literature.

Even in this uncompromising mood, Mr. Street cannot fail to interest the general reader, whether he treats of farm buildings or farm cottages, mechanisation or milk. He suggests that the discipline of mutual checks created by the partnership of a good landlord and a good tenant was better for the land than the (normally) uncontrolled farming of the freeholder. He ask that farming in the future should be treated lik any other industry, without charity or speci favours, but also without specially-impose handicaps. "Dairy cattle, beef cattle, gras sheep and arable sheep," he says, "will be th four corner-stones upon which the prosperity o our post-war farming must be built."

The Streets have farmed Ditchampton fo sixty years. Now what sounds like a shockin piece of town misplanning threatens to destro it as a workable unit. So he has much justificatio for what he calls his tantrums. "The devil o it is," as he remarks, "my tantrums are so ofte right." Despite the indignation and foreboding which liberally besprinkle the book, he is not a soured as he seems to fear: he remains essentially, in the pleasant rural phrase, "in good heart." He will farm on. "No matter how difficult i will be nor how much it will hurt, this transplanting must be faced; for I cannot imagine lif without a farm."

The good-heartedness of Miss Knappett and Miss Barraud is never in doubt. Land Girls from the first days, they have come through the long years of drudgery with senses undulled to the beauties and humours of country life. Miss Knappett has a sharp ear for the Lancashire farm speech: when the wenches (herself and colleague) talk together, the others accuse them of speaking "toffologyposh." Her sense of character is keen. I liked the glimpse of the boss, Alec and herself combining to recite the whole of *Horatius*, and one of her Irish labourers tells perhaps the best one-page ghost-story I have ever read. By the end of the book you know everyone and every clobbered corner of Bath Farm. And you like them.

Equally cheerful is Miss Barraud, whether at plough or at pail, eating fried owl-eggs in error or toasted sparrows from choice. Her Cambridgeshire horizon is rather wider. She writes not only of two farms she worked on, but of her own cottage and garden, her dog and kitten, her branch of the County Library. Like a few other City workers, she seems to have adapted herself with remarkable success. It is a forthright, unfrilled book, with her own photographs in pleasant illustration.

GEOFFREY TREASE

PERSIAN BACKGROUND

Iran. By WILLIAM S. HAAS. *Oxford University Press.* 23s. 6d.

"To present the Iran of to-day against the background of her interpreted past" is an intricate undertaking. Its satisfactory accomplishment in a compact volume of 260 pages is a considerable feat. Besides erudition the author brought to his task a clear appreciation of Oriental systems and a sympathetic regard, cultivated during his connection with the Ministry of Education in Teheran, for the modern Persians. He summarises the recorded history over two and one half millenniums of a country which, since its earliest identification with the Biblical Elam, has figured eminently in the tapesty of world affairs. He observes how an Oriental faculty for reconciling political with transcendental values asserted itself in the greatest periods of Persian history, notably in the initial association of the Achæmenian monarchy with the creed of Zarathustra. He contrasts the universal principles of Achæmenian despotism with those of the later Roman colonial empire; and notes the influence of Zoroastrian concepts, with their derivatives in Mithraism and Manichæism, on Hellenistic—and eventually on Christian—civilisation. The Sassanian Kingdom constituted a final rejection of Hellenism in Iran and reversion to a modified form of Achæmenian imperialism which endured until the Arab irruption in the 7th century. Thenceforward Iran, subjected to a foreign rule, suffered political eclipse until the rise of the native Safavid dynasty when Shia tenets of Islam were elevated to the State religion. The long and terrible period of anarchy prior to the Safavids exercised a devastating influence on Persian mentality and stimulated the sense of transiency in mundane affairs which found delicate expression in poetical art, philosophical thought and mystical experience. It also aggravated a certain greediness in the Persian character, which is tempered by native wit and a fine appreciation of human values. The author considers that the history of modern Iran begins to be written in the sixteenth century when Ottoman policies exercised a dominant influence in Persian affairs. The Kajar dynasty in the nineteenth century ushered in a new phase of contacts between Persia and the European Powers, by the confluence of French, English, Russian and ultimately of German imperialistic designs.

Adequate descriptions of the country and people, religion, society and government, supply the canvas for a well-considered sketch of Reza Shah and his impetuous transformation of the modern Persian State. This is perhaps the most valuable chapter of the book. It records the signal services to his country rendered by this uncultured, zealous and single-minded patriot; his adroit opposition to foreign penetration and diplomatic intrigues; his measures to promote literacy and elevate the status of women, to oppose religious institutional and other conservatisms, to curb the truculence of the tribal leaders and to supersede primitive economies. It also records the heavy burdens laid on the shoulders of the Persian people by hectic modernisation on state-capitalist lines, in higher taxation and depressed standards of living, and by the demolition of a traditional structure of native society. A general assessment of the profit and loss account of Reza Shah's twenty-year dictatorship reveals serious deficits in the material, as much as in the moral and political, fields of national life. The author's hope is that Iran "left to herself" may find a way back to forms of economic activity and a social structure more agreeable to her mentality.

Two diplomatic instruments are cited in the appendices — the Anglo-Russian treaty of January 1942, and the Anglo-American-Russian statement in December 1943—which contain formal guarantees respecting the sovereign independence and territorial integrity of Iran. Yet no diplomatic invention can change the geographical fact that Iran constitutes a strategic bastion of the great land bridge which connects the bulk of Asia with Europe and Africa. The ancient Persians survived the assaults of foreign armies and migratory peoples against this bastion. In a differently ordered world the modern Persians may be spared such martial stresses; but they will be required to revive their native forces if they are to secure the foundations of a national integrity. The last fifty years of Persian history, of international intrigue, internal disorder and arbitrary rule, provided no school for unbiased political thinking. Tribal and territorial loyalties deflect a wider patriotism. Political organisation on any recognised democratic model is still virtually non-existent. As the author observes significantly, while the Persian peasants belong to an older civilisation and are much more individualistic than the Russians, the situation of the masses in Iran of to-day may be compared with that of the Russian masses at the moment of the Bolshevik revolution!

Some good photographs, a useful map and index (but no bibliography) are included with this very readable and informative book.

STEWART SYMES

NEW NOVELS

Prayer is Better than Sleep. By ERIC ALLEN. *Big Ben Books.* 9*d*.

The Moonlight. By JOYCE CARY. *Michael Joseph.* 8*s*. 6*d*.

From time to time a professional philosophic term escapes from the professional page to become, in some distorted form, a member of the layman's vocabulary. The superman (who has travelled from Zarathustra to the comic strip), *élan vital* and the immoderate application of the word surrealist are recent examples of this lay incursion into the sanctum of philosophy. Since the liberation of Paris the word "existentialist" has also become a rather dubious counter in the language of the intelligentsia. It is useless for the philosophers to moan:

> "That is not what I meant at all
> That is not it at all."

We hardly care what they meant. They have given us a word, and we have adapted their word to mean, in the first place, something that we can understand, and in the second place something for which a word was needed. I have read none of the philosophical works of Sartre, Heidegger, Jaspers or Kierkegaard, but I have received the indirect impact of existentialism with a good deal of force. During some four months spent in Paris since August, 1944, it was impossible that I shouldn't. I shall therefore definitely, and shamelessly, use the word existentialist in the sense which I believe it to bear for the inexpert layman. Existentialism (p), we will call it, distinguishing the popular conception from existentialism (ph) or philosophical. Existentialism (p), then, is defined as an attitude to life which is pessimistic, inconclusive, contradictory and futile. It implies a certain explicit lack of motive, an assertion of human freedom but of the uselessness of that freedom. It asserts that the most admirable actions are the least "reasonable."

Thus guarded, I hope, from the assault of the expert I shall write that both the admirable novels under review are at least tinged with existentialism (p). I am not suggesting that either Mr. Allen or Mr. Cary has even received the indirect impact of Heidegger, has even, necessarily, heard of the new philosophy. We should not have adopted the term if it had not corresponded to an attitude which already existed but lacked a title.

Is it the fact that Mr. Allen's scene is laid in North Africa and among Arabs which, evoking Albert Camus, tempted me to apply the label? (I know that Camus is, according to Sartre, no existentialist, but existentialism (p) takes little account of these subtleties. Luther, according to Catholics, was no Christian, but they are all Christians to the unbeliever.) It might be rather that there is something intrinsically existentialist (p) in the climate, landscape and inhabitants of North Africa. *Prayer is Better than Sleep* is an admirably dry and laconic account of a young down-and-out Englishman drifting through Tunisia. The book opens in a Paris office of the Crédit Municipal, where the hero (how peculiarly inapposite is this conventional term to describe the protagonist of such a book) is waiting in a queue to pledge his watch. Admirable, the description of his poverty in Paris, Henry Miller but without the bravado. A *combinaison* with a tart enables him to fleece an English tourist and, with fifteen hundred francs in his pocket, to make at once for the Gare de Lyon, Marseilles, Africa. Even this journey to the sun is instinctive, without any more conscious motive than the migration of birds. "He felt the compulsion to hold on to this summer."

The only plot in the book is the hero's constant, and constantly disappointed, expectation of receiving a small sum of money due to him from an English editor. Not only is this the only plot; it is the only theme which is treated with strong emotion. The money becomes, indeed, a symbol of life, a symbol if I understand the title, of prayer against sleep. Pessimistic though it be, existentialism (p) has a passionate preference for life over death, if only that the process of piling absurdity

PHILOSOPHY
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on absurdity may go on. It may be also that death proves indigestible to this philosophy, for, whatever we may think of it, death is clearly a conclusion of some kind; even a solution.

The hero (victim? no, for he knows very well what he is doing) wanders from Gabes to Sousse, from Sousse to Sfax and Djerdida, now alone, now in the company of nomadic Arabs, now with a donkey, now by motor bus. He sells his personal belongings here and there, lives on the hospitality of the Arabs and finally on the expectation of his money's arrival. The book ends with his expatriation.

The merits of *Prayer is Better than Sleep* are a vivid and (with occasional serious lapses) an unaffected language; an honest, and therefore novel, account of the hero's emotions; a strange, rather avid lightheartedness which far removes it from turgidity. The philosophy, of course, however unconsciously accepted, enforces that "refusal to be great" which Lionel Trilling claims to have discovered in Forster. Man's stature is reduced to pygmy scale and his activities are deliberately unimportant. This is a good and unusual book, but it would be a disastrous bore if it set a fashion.

To call Mr. Carey an existentialist would indeed be to stretch the term (even p) to breaking point. Yet in much that he has written he shows a certain savage sense of futility, of illogicality. Many of his novels, and *The Moonlight* among them, appear to be leading up to an obviously "right" conclusion, to an harmonious last chord, only to defy the pattern and to end almost nowhere. But Mr. Cary is, without the least sentimentality, a compassionate writer. His judgment of what happens in the novels is never obtrusive, but we are aware that a judgment has been made. Like Mr. Allen, he has a great preference for life over death, but in him this preference is zestful, inquisitive and active. It is even with a sort of sardonic zest that he revels in futility.

The Moonlight is a less original book than *Prayer is Better than Sleep*, but this may be only that it is Mr. Cary's eleventh book, while Mr. Allen has written his first. But certainly there is nothing new either in the method or the style of this novel. We are confronted at the opening with a situation, a young farmer kissing a girl and the girl's aunt observing the embrace with satisfaction. With many skilful flashbacks into the past of the Venn family, with the appearance of an intellectual rival to the farmer, with a death, a dramatic revelation that aunt is really mother, with a great deal of effective local colour, this long novel unwinds itself to its inconclusive conclusion. It is not simply that neither of the young men wins the hand of Amanda Venn. It is that all the three young characters are left in a state of suspension. All have undergone a certain spiritual deterioration, but they have not gone far enough on that road to provide a "fitting" climax. We do not feel, in any case, that they can remain just where they are left. This is no hostile criticism. The book ends, I think, as it should end. A statement has been made. I take that statement to be of the contrast between a younger generation's independence of their elders on the one hand, and, on the other, the sinister, ineluctable influence of the dead progenitors on their immediate descendants. It is a more laboured, a more unemphatic version of *Ghosts*.

Mr. Cary is always a model of competence, occasionally a writer of real brilliance and insight, sometimes disappointingly wooden and unsatisfying. The farming scenes in this book are as good as anything he has written since *The African Witch*. On the other hand, the intellectual conversation between Robin and Amanda rings distressingly brittle and false. The elementary rubbish of their anthropology was surely unintended. Indeed, Mr. Cary is at his best with character parts, for he knows exactly how to save them from caricature. Aunt Bessie and Aunt Ella could not be improved on. Robin moves among them like a robot, labelled "Neurotic and Intellectual."

PHILIP TOYNBEE

THE J.P.

The Justice of the Peace To-day and To-morrow. THE HALDANE SOCIETY. *Gollancz. 6d.*

The Haldane Society has produced a booklet indispensable to all concerned with the incidence of justice in a capitalist society. Historically, the Justice of the Peace in England has been a member of the governing class and he has shared its prides and prejudices to the degree that his judicial function has been nothing much more than the legal department of capitalist administration. He is, of course, no longer the important functionary he was in Augustan England; but in his attenuated form as the magistrate in the petty-sessional court he symbolises the law as it makes its impact upon the working class. This Report examines all the criteria—magisterial age and ability, the technique of appointment, the relations between clerk and bench, the problem of remuneration—that go to make that impact cold, unfriendly, unsympathetic. The method of appointment at the recommendation, to the Lord Chancellor, of advisory county bodies whose composition is secret has meant a heavy bias of choice in favour of conservative nominees from the local gentry, tradesmen, professional classes; and it is significant that the recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1910, to the effect that the advisory bodies should be fully representative of local opinion, have remained stillborn. The working-class man has had no chance to influence the bodies; in the result, the magisterial benches, overwhelmingly, are composed of men and women who possess leisure and wealth sufficiently to perform a gratuitous service, and whose social outlook, if not hostile, is at least alien to the experience of those working-class people who constitute the major proportion of petty crime delinquents. They entertain precious little appreciation of the sociological nature of crime; and in matters like debt and matrimonial dispute they too often display inadequate insight into the close relations that exist between the financial and the emotional aspects of working-class life. No one who has watched the behaviour of the typical defendant in what, with ominous significance, we term "police" courts—intimidated by the legal atmosphere, awkward in cross-examination, often ignorant of his rights in important matters like free legal aid—can but feel that the unwritten assumption of our legal system still remains Bishop Horsley's remark that all the people have to do with the laws is to obey them.

More than that. The Report points out that the nature of the office, its lay recruitment, means that too often its personnel are ignorant, not simply of legal principle, but even of the laws of evidence and procedure without which it is easy for small injustices to pass unchallenged. The clerk of the court, consequently, tends to wield a dangerous influence over their minds, the bench, thereby, is liable to degenerate into the status of a jury dependent on him not only for advice but sometimes for decision. The lay magistrate, further, tends to accept the "bona-fides" of police evidence without sufficient scrutiny; he comes, after all, to be on good terms with the police, often he mixes with them in the same social world. The dangers of collusion that this collaboration breeds has been portrayed by Lord Justice Goddard in his Report on the Longton case; and the earlier Hereford case illustrates the danger of a magistrate's bench that

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now, who'd make a good Executor? Someone I can really trust. Better be someone who understands investments, too. Someone who won't find it all a nuisance. And, of course, someone who's sure to be there at the time—that's not so easy . . ."

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has become over-imbued with the police mentality. The suggestion of the Report that nominees to the Bench should, first, undergo examination in procedure and criminal law and, secondly, receive remuneration for expenses in order to widen the chances of entry for working-class ability, would do much to democratize the system. And compulsory retirement at the age of 65 would help to minimise that ridiculous juxtaposition of age on the bench and youth in the dock which makes so many of the courts tragi-comic spectacles. Above all, the recommendation that the advisory committees should be remodelled so as to include more representative bodies like the Trades Councils, the local authorities, the local social-service bodies, would go a long way to abolish what is at present the evil of a "spoils" system in which nomination is the reward for political long service and good conduct. For once the judicial process becomes contaminated with political favouritism it forfeits its claim to embody that impartiality without which it appears to masquerade as the defender of "the oppressor's wrong" and "the proud man's contumely."

G. K. LEWIS

The Arts. *Lund, Humphries.* 10s.

A rousing welcome to this miscellany, and may it rapidly take root as a periodical. For here the Muses meet. Duncan Grant illustrates quite deliciously the best poem Mr. W. R. Rodgers has yet given us; Sir Kenneth Clark writes of architectural backgrounds to Quattrocento paintings and reliefs; part of the manuscript score of *The Rape of Lucretia* accompanies a most promising *maquette* for the setting by John Piper; Raymond Mortimer takes samples of "the desirable life" from the Old Masters, and is so brazen in his "literary" approach as to add purple patches of description and comment. Herbert Read introduces Pignon, Edward Sackville West shows Henry Moore's latest figure in successive stages; Desmond Shawe-Taylor describes with the help of photographs the Stockholm *Peter Grimes*. There is a lively article on the English cinema, and an unplausible effort to make us believe that "functional" architecture can be aptly adorned with painted tiles of traditional design. Lawrence Gowing's dialogue between an artist and the apple he is painting deserves special praise; it is very well written and full of feeling. A feeling for quality informs the whole miscellany; and whereas *Contact* was so bedizened with typographical whimsies that even the best writers became unreadable, the printing and lay-out of *The Arts* are exemplary.

Week-end Competitions

No. 858

Set by G. W. Stonier

Competitors are invited, greatly daring, to invent a new Itma character while Itma is in recess. Limit, 200 words. Entries by Monday, July 15th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 855

Set by Desmond Hawkins

In 1883 Thomas Hardy made this memorandum: "Write a list of things which everybody thinks and nobody says; and a list of things that everybody says and nobody thinks." The usual prizes are offered for the best three pairs of such "things."

Report by Desmond Hawkins

I fancied that competitors would be working much poorer ground than Hardy had in 1883, but modern "frankness" is evidently not so whole-hearted as it's cracked up to be. Hypocrisy still flourishes in the land, although its idiom has altered. "No cigarettes" and "New Customers Welcome" would have been painfully sincere sixty years ago. . . .

Apart from the small change of sociable velleities—a too easy target—what are the current subjects on which "our words fly up, our thoughts remain below"? Principally, to judge from the entries, they are politics, jobs, family relationships and personal appearance. Some of the things we say, without meaning them, are "I simply loathe Christmas" (Miles March), "I'm simply *longing* to hear all your news" (E. Gordon)—"Simply" is of course a sure signal of an impending hypocrisy—"We shall wait for two or three years and then have *lots* of children" (Pegasus), "No room on top" (S. W. Green), "There are no strawberries" (Gordon Simpson) and "Women are the intellectual equals of men" (John J. Dunne).

On the other side—things we think but don't say—I hand a cokernut to J. R. Till for ("Sooner or later they all crib my ideas"), Guy Innes ("Do women really know how to dress?"), M. E. Ratte ("What a mess my political party have made of that"), and F. W. Allen (for haunting someone's wedding with a thought-balloon coming out of his head inscribed "In five years you two will bore each other beyond words").

When it comes to awarding the usual prizes I find the usual prize-winners closing in on me. Allan Laing and R. Crawshay-Williams survive each successive shortening of my short list; and Stanley Sharpless has a consistently good half-dozen items, with one first-rater among them ("I shall never get run over by a bus"). J. R. Till, in a second entry, nearly won my vote by condensing six examples into six words—and Vere Oakley lost it by requiring two pages of near-misses to hit on an occasional winner ("The Editor regrets" was a neat one that nobody else noticed). I award three guineas to Ira and the rest I divide equally between Granville Garley, R. Crawshay-Williams and Allen M. Laing.

1. *Says*—"I've never met anyone quite like you.
   You're . . . well . . . *different* somehow."

Thinks—"I've known your type before, but it's still good."

2. "Of course I'd never have anything *really* Black Market."
   "I can't afford it, but butter's butter."
3. "I always go in for these things, just for the fun of it."
   "If there's any justice I ought to win this one."

IRA

Everybody says, nobody thinks:
"The United Nations . . ."
"Pleased to meet you."
"Money isn't everything."

Everybody thinks, nobody says:
"This is the wittiest entry of the competition."
"I wish *I* could find the Black Market."
(In a queue) "What is all this stuff about declining population?"

GRANVILLE GARLEY

Everybody says, nobody thinks:
"I don't want to be unkind," but I do think . . ."
"But *of course* I'm not annoyed."
"I find pornography so *dull*."
Everybody thinks, nobody says:
"Hey! That's my last bottle of whiskey,"
"Can't you see I'm right, you fool?"
"I wish I were a Duke."

R. CRAWSHAY-WILLIAMS

Unthinking Remarks:
When introduced, I murmur: "How d'ye do?"
But I don't think or care a bit. Do you?

All conscious thought we're really scorning,
When you or I exclaim: "Good morning!"

There's nothing true, sincere or fervent
In "Sir, I'm your obedient servant."

Unspoken Thoughts:
It's kind of her to call, I know:
But, bless her, will she never go?

Without conceit (of which I've not a scrap)
I really think I'm quite a decent chap.

I often wonder (thought, you know, is free)
How other people bear not being me.

ALLAN M. LAING

Personal

JOIN party young prof. and university people going Denmark and Sweden, Aug. 23rd-Sept. 7th; other parties, Switzerland, July 28th, Aug. 10th, Sept. 1st and 14th. Sailing on Broads July 20th-27th: Box 1876.

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Personal—continued

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LABOUR Monthly, July, 1946. 25th Anniversary number. Our First Quarter of a Century, by the Editor; Notes of the Month, R. P. Arnot; Outlook after Bournemouth, Harry Pollitt; the European Elections, W. Rust; Cotton Working Party, W. Bolton; Travel Notes No. 3, R. P. Dutt; Anniversary Greetings; Book Reviews. From Publishers, 134 Ballards Lane, London, N.3. Postpaid 7*d*.

SAVE the Children from Adults (by Dr. Frank C. Foster now in Germany), Children and the War (by D. L. Lipson, M.P.), and Poland: Land of Sorrow and of Hope (by Mosa Anderson, written from Poland) are among the articles in "The World's Children," July. Price 6*d*. 20 Gordon Sq. W.C.1.

"TREES" Summer Number presents the case for World Afforestation, the task of physical, social and individual revival, the escape from famine and the hope of peace. 1*s*. The Men of the Trees, Puncknoll, Dorset.

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